



CARLISLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Exploring the Future of K-8 Facilities

March 2024

During months of careful study, a committee comprised of nearly 100 district faculty and staff members, parents, and community members have been studying and discussing the challenges and opportunities of our district facilities. The committee explored 10 different models that included a number of different ways to reconfigure grade levels, incorporate a new school building, and use our spaces in different, more efficient ways.

The Facilities Committee is Continuing to Analyze Its Two Final Options

Over many months, our Facilities Committee worked to narrow 10 models down to two preferred models. Now, the committee is continuing its work by breaking into five subcommittees to further analyze how the two models will impact educational programming, extracurriculars, scheduling, staffing, attendance boundaries, transportation, and other details.

The Committee hopes to make a final recommendation to the School Board in April 2024. The earliest any changes would go into effect is during the 2025-2026 school year.

Each of the models involves building a new school and closing two elementary schools, LeTort and Mt. Holly Springs.

Each of the models reconfigures our grades in this way:

- Kindergarten through third grade kept together in our lower elementary schools. (Our administrative staff is fully supportive of this idea as it we believe it really helps us to focus our academic efforts on building a stronger support for our youngest students, which will help them emerge as even stronger learners.)
- Grades 4 – 6 kept together in either one larger or two medium-sized elementary schools.
- Grades 7 – 8 kept together in either one new intermediate school or in two converted middle schools.

For consistency, we are referring to the two leading models as “Model 6” and “Model 9” since that’s the way they were analyzed in our committee. None of the models considered alters anything physical at our high school.

What is Driving the Need for Change?



Growing Enrollment

Cumberland County is the fastest-growing county in Pennsylvania.

New housing developments are bringing more students to our schools, with growth concentrated in the northern end of the District.

A need to balance our elementary class sizes



As enrollment is shifting, some schools and classes are becoming larger or smaller than others. We want to ensure that we can provide balanced and reasonably consistent class sizes to maximize student/teacher instruction and space.

A need to more efficiently and effectively support our growing number of students who need special services



We need to ensure we have the space in our schools to provide the small-group programming and therapeutic and educational services to maximize our students’ potential.



A need to maximize the placement of our staff in our schools so that every student has the same access to excellent programs

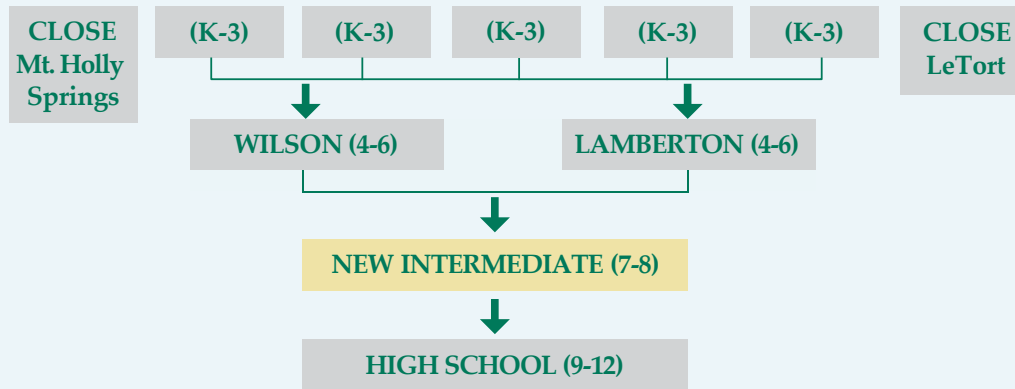
We want our elementary and middle-level students to experience the same excellent programming regardless of which school building they attend. We want our students and community to truly feel a part of “One Carlisle.” We want to maximize our capacity to offer programs like PreK/Head Start, Music, Technology, etc.

A need to find solutions to respond to our aging school buildings

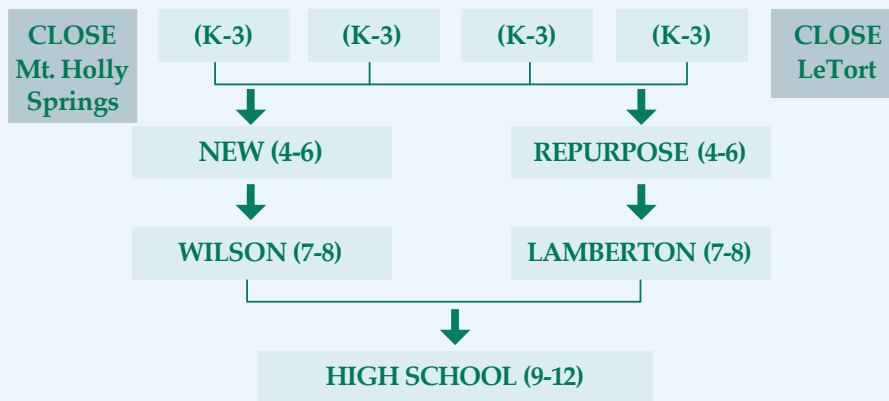
The resources saved in costly maintenance and repairs can be spent more effectively on new spaces that offer more opportunities.



MODEL 6: Build a new school for 7 and 8 grades (approx. 1,000 students) on CASD property adjacent to the high school complex. Modify the existing middle schools so that they are designed to accommodate the educational programming needed for students in 4 - 6 grades. Close the aging Mt. Holly Springs and LeTort Elementary Schools and convert the other five elementary schools into schools for kindergarten through third grade.



MODEL 9: Build a new 700-student school for grades 4 – 6 at the site of the “Old Bellaire School,” which is being demolished. Add space for 350 students to one of our existing elementary schools, so that it can become an upper elementary for grades 4 – 6. Wilson and Lamberton (currently middle schools) can be used to accommodate grades 7 and 8. Close the aging Mt. Holly Springs and LeTort Elementary Schools and convert the other four elementary schools into schools for kindergarten through third grade.



Strengths of Both Models

Both options:

- Provide a long-term solution to enrollment growth.
- Provide an affordable solution to our challenges.
- Help to align our programs and are responsive to student needs.
- Provide more balanced class sizes.
- Allow for CASD students to come together at an earlier age (with half of their graduating class by grade 4).
- Increase efficiency by spreading the K - 8 programming across fewer buildings.
- Close two elementary buildings, introducing the opportunity to rethink the use of the property or sell the property.

Challenges of Both Models

Both options:

- Redistricting (moving attendance boundaries) cannot be avoided.
- Additional staffing will likely be needed for future schedules.
- May require duplication of services to meet the needs of an additional level with grade 4 - 6 schools.

Because the school district has an excellent credit rating, its borrowing capacity is strong which allows for additional funding while maintaining the District's current level of debt.