



District plans for proposed school

By [Michelle Perry](#), Special Section Editor/Education Reporter
Friday, June 8, 2007

Moffat County School District and Neenan Archistruction officials developed a plan for a possible new 85,500-square foot middle school Thursday with input from community members.

The plan includes an open commons area/cafetorium, a double gym and a large media center. The plan also allows for a band room, a choir room, a concessions area for games and art and industrial art rooms.

"We really need to design a building that best serves our student needs," Superintendent Pete Bergmann said.

The Board of Education approved Neenan to move forward with a \$28 million bond issue to build a new sixth- to eighth-grade middle school and upgrade the district's remaining buildings.

The plan, which will require voter approval in November, includes converting East, Ridgeview and Sunset elementary schools and Craig Intermediate School into preschool to fifth-grade buildings.

The Fort Collins-based company heard public input from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, then presented their hand-drawn plans to district employees and community members at the end of the day.

The plan for the middle school groups each of the three grades together in their own "pods" on two floors. The remainder of the building would be one and a half floors high.

The plan allows for sections of the building to be closed to public access during after-hours events. There are allowances for bus loops, staff parking and student drop-off points.

The new building would be located north of the current structure. The baseball field would be relocated to Moffat County High School, but the existing track and football field would remain.

Students would attend school in the current structure during construction, which would run from April 2008 to April 2009. The current middle school would be demolished, and landscaping and parking lots would be built during the summer of 2009.

The items of contention Thursday were the size of the gym and the inclusion of an auditorium.

The gym is slated to be 73 by 96 feet. The board will consider increasing the size to 93 by 96 feet to allow for more gym space and seating for 700 people.

The board will also consider adding an auditorium to the facility, which was not included in the original plan. A new auditorium at 8,000 square feet -- about the size of Craig Middle School's current auditorium -- would cost an additional \$1.3 million on top of the middle school's current \$14 million price tag.

The board may also consider keeping the existing auditorium and gym and building the new facility as planned. But creating walls and infrastructure to keep part of the existing building open may near the \$1.3 million a new auditorium would cost taxpayers, Bergmann said.

CMS Principal Bill Toovey said the design sessions were helpful to hear from staff and the public about student needs.

He has not decided how he feels about keeping the existing auditorium or building a new one. But with demand for the high school auditorium high, he sees the need for additional facilities.

"It really makes that place valuable," Toovey said.

One suggestion was not including the auditorium in the bond issue and adding it on later.

"I think we all know if we're going to build this we need to do it now," School Board member Andrea Camp said.

But board member Karen Stillion said she thinks it's important to keep within the board's target of \$28 million in construction and upgrades.

The School Board meets again June 28 to further discuss facility issues. In the meantime, Neenan officials said they need to meet with district officials to address issues such as a sloped versus flat roof and getting a soil report and possible site survey completed.

For more information on the district's proposed bond issue and facility upgrades, call 824-3268.