

Westmont Hilltop School District

Press Release – May 13, 2014

The Westmont Hilltop Board of Education last night approved contracting with Turner Construction Company of Pittsburgh to lead the District as construction manager through two projects that will add instructional classroom space to ultimately move the 5th and 6th grades to the Elementary Building and the 7th and 8th grades to the High School. The tentative plan is for additional new construction at both the High School and Elementary, and a renovation of the existing space at the Elementary School. The District's budget modeling forecast provides that this grade alignment in a two building configuration shall provide sufficient operational efficiencies that taxes will not be required to be raised to complete the project.

The District has had several studies completed on the Middle School, which was constructed in 1920. These independent studies estimated a cost in excess of \$18 million to renovate the aging facility to bring it up in compliance with ADA standards and make it compatible with the educational programming parents expect for their students. The \$18 million price tag and resulting operational inefficiencies were just not possible when the board considered the needed updates for the Elementary School and the continued shrinking state support and spiraling costs of the employee pension crisis.

At this time no decision has been made for what becomes of the existing middle school. Everything remains on the table for the existing building, from marketing it to a private developer for apartments or senior living to demolition for added space to be used with the existing gym and Price Field. No matter what becomes of the older structure, the gym at the school is expected to remain as a community asset and

the board has engaged Architect Jeff Haman to restore some of the masonry and replace the metal siding on the Building.

The Board and Administration are excited to finally get this project off the ground. After many years of discussion, we're done with the band aids and scaffolding, it's time to give our community the school buildings they deserve!