

Q: Is it necessary to build a new high school?

A: Staunton is fortunate to have talented high school teachers and administrators who share their passion for education with students every day. Unfortunately, the environment in which they work does not always provide them with the best opportunities to maximize students' learning experience. After 18 months of deep deliberation, the School Board decided on a long-term solution instead of a band aid fix to a failing facility. Realizing that a new high school was not only ideal but vital to providing a high-quality education for Staunton's youth, the Board chose to invest in a new building rather than classroom trailers for a renovation. Two critical factors helped the Board come to that realization:

1. Currently, Lee HS does not offer the workspace, technology or flexibility required for a modern-day education that most adequately prepares students for college and a career.
2. The school's infrastructure is deteriorating and not conducive to a fully dynamic learning environment, creating considerable disruptions to daily instruction.

Q: What are the expected benefits of building a new high school?

A. Four key benefits:

1. **Better technology:** A new school would provide students with flexible, light-filled, open spaces that are comprehensively equipped with new and essential technology that will better help students prepare for life after high school.
2. **Better collaboration:** It would also provide areas for teamwork among teachers in which they co-plan, co-teach, integrate curricula and share resources.
3. **Better service:** Students, staff, parents and the Staunton community would be better served with improved learning and work spaces, shareable spaces for community use, and all athletic and extracurricular facilities on one campus.
4. **Better community:** Research has proven that a community that invests in its schools attracts higher-skill industries, increases property values and experiences increased student achievement, thereby improving the overall quality of life for *all* City residents.

All of these factors will help to foster a thriving learning environment and community for many years to come.

Q. How will you fund the construction of a new school and when will it be built?

A. While the School Board voted for the construction of a state-of-the-art high school on a new site to include all athletic facilities, the School Board's action must be followed by action from Staunton City Council to approve funding for the new school. The estimated cost to construct a new high school in a new location is \$75 million. Understandably, a capital expenditure of this magnitude will require careful contemplation by City Council. If City Council provides the funding, the school division doesn't expect to break ground on a new building until 2019.

Q. Would it be more cost effective to renovate the school?

A. The current facility was built as a junior high school, so it would require extensive and incredibly costly renovations to meet the standards of a modern-day high school. The cost variance in building a new high school as opposed to overhauling the current facility is an important consideration. The School Board finds it is more practical and responsible to invest in a new school that provides a 21st-century learning environment for Staunton students rather than piece together a solution to an increasingly inadequate and declining building that will require significant ongoing maintenance costs.

Q. May I schedule a tour of the current high school to learn about the need?

A. We welcome you to call or email Dr. Mark Rowicki, Lee HS principal, to schedule a tour. It's best to call him between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 540.332.3926 or you may email him at mrowicki@staunton.k12.va.us. We will work to find a mutually convenient time for a tour, with a primary goal of avoiding disruption of the school's daily operations.

Further questions and requests for information may be directed to the [Staunton City School Board](#) and the Superintendent's office at 540.332.3920.