

KENT BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUBMISSION TO KENT BOARD OF SELECTMEN
of the
TOWN-WIDE KCS BUILDING PLANNING COMMITTEE
PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

April 1, 1999

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1. BOARD OF EDUCATION ACTION

The Board of Education determined that on the basis of current overcrowding and the State Department of Education projections for the growth of the KCS student population over the next ten years, that consideration be given to expansion of the school building. In view of the known requirement that the ADA and Fire Code renovations be undertaken to complete Phase III and bring the building into compliance, it was decided that this required renovation project be combined with a possible expansion project so that any construction would be done in the most economical way. Should these projects be done separately, the cost would be considerably higher, especially the compliance project, which experience has proven, is too modest in size to attract competitive bidding.

In its October, 1998, meeting the Board organized the Town-Wide KCS Building Planning Committee. It appointed two board members (the Board Building Committee), the Principal, and three teachers (to be self-designated) to this committee. It advertised in local papers for public members to volunteer and requested the following persons to serve as members: the former chairman of the Town KCS Building Committee, a PTA member, and one member of the Board of Selectmen. Five public members volunteered and were appointed. They include one professional construction engineer, one retired teacher, one active teacher (in a New Milford Elementary School), one KCS mother, and one life-long Kent resident. The following is a list of this diversified committee totaling 16 members, of whom only 4 have children and one has grand-children in KCS.

<u>Member Name</u>	<u>Local Address</u>	<u>Personal Background</u>
Bruce Adams	Kent Center School	Teacher KCS - 7th ,8th Grade Social Studies
Gail Burke	Elizabeth Street	Volunteer-No KCS Chldrn, Tcher, New Milford
Rufus de Rham	16 Cobble Road	Selectman - w/KCS children
Francois DiGregario	96 Fuller Mtn Rd.	Volunteer - No KCS Chldrn Retired Tchr NYS
Norma Dolan	PO Box 81	Volunteer - no KCS Children life-long resident
Jonathan Draper	29 Studio Hill Rd.	Volunteer - w/KCS Chldrn, Construction Eng.
Therese Duncan	118 Kent Road	President KCS PTA w/KCS Children
Edward Epstein	Kent Center School	KCS Principal
John Mauer	104 Geer Mountain Rd.	Kent Bd of Ed. Building Com. Vice Chairman
Curt Mechare	Kent Center School	KCS Head Custodian
Stephanie O'Rourke	PO Box 84	Volunteer - w/KCS Chldrn, Com. Secretary
James Palmer	132 South Kent Road	Former KCS Town Bldg Com. Chairman
Margaret Solomon	369 Kent Hollow Road	Kent Bd of Ed. Chairman
Norman Vandervoort	99B Cobble Road	Kent Bd.of Ed. Building Com. Chairman
Valerie Vega	Kent Center School	Teacher KCS - Foreign Languages
Edwinna Amorosa	Kent Center School	Teacher KCS (Alternate) - Library Specialist

2. MISSION STATEMENT

This committee adopted as its mission:

To determine the elements that must be incorporated into a building plan in order to meet the educational needs of the young people of Kent for the next 10 years. (later to be recognized as extended into the foreseeable future.)

3. FINDINGS -- EDUCATION SPECIFICATIONS

a. HISTORY AND VISION -- From the outset it was clear to the Town-Wide KCS Building and Planning Committee that, due to the constraints of the present school site with no available adjoining land, any building plan designed to meet the educational needs of the KCS is influenced heavily by the fact that this is, in all likelihood, the last expansion of which this building is capable. In fact, the committee tried to extend its vision of what would be a prudently fiscal project that would satisfy the needs of the town's school into the future millennium. The last expansion of KCS began in 1969 and was completed in 1972. That project has met the needs of Kent for nearly 30 years. Although we do not have a crystal ball, we would expect the current plan would have as long a useful life.

Kent Center School has filled the extra space it developed in 1972 so that today, there are not sufficient classrooms for the educational programs now provided, and the population projections furnished by the State Department of Education indicate an increase in the next several years of approximately 30 students. These projections, augmented by local information (ignored in the state statistics), indicate a somewhat higher upper level of population, and a more sustained future population, which has been recognized in the committee's plan. Many of our current programs did not exist or were in their infancy in 1972, many staffing and space requirements weren't even conceived in 1972.

Obviously, the educational specifications are the most important components at the core of our charge. The major reason for expansion is to address the present and future educational needs of our children. Space requirements in a school setting are vastly different than in the past, primarily due to state and federal education mandates, and also because of the town's support of relatively new educational programs, such as laboratory science, foreign language, library/media resources, and technology, which are already successfully in place as part of Kent's comprehensive curriculum.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE -- The current foreign language program begins instruction in third grade. There are two half-time teachers (teaching two different languages each). They do not have a classroom!

COMPUTER ROOM -- Our computer room is packed into a classroom on the upper level of the school, but the demand for use in that room is greater than its capabilities. The existing computer room was converted from a standard classroom and has served well in this growing program. However, by building a new computer room as one of the new classrooms, it will be possible to enhance the capacity and flexibility of room configuration with wiring and support accessories designed for the purpose. The old computer room will be restored to use as a standard classroom.

SCIENCE CLASSROOM LABORATORIES -- KCS has always been proud of its science program. We were one of the first schools to offer a full science curriculum, five days a week to all classes in grades 5 through 8. The two science classroom/laboratories are not well configured to accommodate the changing needs of computer and other technology augmented science education. Since new classrooms are to be built to meet the space requirement, it was obvious that the most economical and forward looking way

to upgrade the science classrooms is to create new classroom/laboratories in the new construction, and convert the existing rooms into standard classrooms. Considering society's expansion of the science and technology job markets, KCS should continue to upgrade these advanced curricula for its students. This conversion has made available the existing science preparation room, no longer needed for the science rooms, to be modified into a much needed custodian maintenance resource..

LIBRARY//MEDIA CENTER -- The librarian's role has changed from one who checked out books to students, to the role of a media specialist who sees every student in the school at least once a week, frequently in a teacher's role. The library is the hub of the school. All teachers work with the media specialist and the library equipment to facilitate classroom learning. The present library does not support this change in educational philosophy and needs to be enlarged and redesigned to accommodate multiple group activities and individual research facilities appropriately situated.

SPECIAL EDUCATION -- Mandates for special education translate into a burgeoning part of the staffing and space requirements of the school. KCS has three full-time teachers, one part time teacher, and seven teacher aids. Where once students needing special education attended outside residential schools, they are part of the inclusion model for special education endorsed by state and federal mandates. In fact, KCS won a state award in 1996 for its exemplary inclusion model. KCS , as well as all elementary schools in Region 1, staffs a full-time psychologist, speech clinician and Title 1 teacher. KCS also has a Home-School Liaison. These staff need space in which to meet individually or with small groups if students, independent of the classroom where these people are being instructed.

ARTS AND MUSIC -- These continue to be heavily subscribed programs at KCS. Despite the expressed desire for greater stage and theater space, the committee feels that additional space at KCS which would be used sparingly or designed for too specific a use would not serve the best interests of the community and would be fiscally irresponsible. Renovation in the Common Room will be an inexpensive way to enhance theater production in the lower school.

4. RESOLUTION -- THE BUILDING PLAN

After several meetings of the committee, where the needs of the school were identified, it was decided that we required the help of an experienced architect. Because of the past dealings with C J Lawler Associates on the earlier fire code and ADA code corrections, we elected to use his services again. He had demonstrated a complete knowledge of current school needs, the legal requirements that schools must meet, and clever and cost-saving solutions to the architectural problems encountered. The Board of Education had a credit balance of \$3500.00 with C. J. Lawler from a previous project, which Mr. Lawler considered sufficient to cover the preliminary work to be done with this committee.

With his intimate knowledge of the existing school layout and its problems, he was able to coordinate and develop a new plan. As was stated, the school building is on a very confined piece of property. This greatly limits what can be done to expand the building. The remaining Fire Code and ADA renovations that could not be completed during the first renovation contract due to lack of funds are included in this plan.

The Committee-recommended plan is attached as Appendix A. This plan evolved over several meetings and the finished product is a compromise between what was desired and what can be realistically considered necessary for our school needs for the next 20 – 30 years. It takes into account many of the needs that have been brought about by State mandated programs, society mandated programs and the programs needed by our children as determined by our Board of Education. It also takes into consideration the expected changes in school population. The possibility of adding a second floor to the old section of the school was considered not feasible due to the difficulty and excess cost. There were several other proposed changes that the Committee considered and discarded.

The project is divided into 3 basic categories:

1. **New Construction:** The major new construction consists of a new computer room adjacent to the Library, expansion of the Library/Media center, building 2 new science/laboratory classrooms and 2 regular classrooms and associated lavatories at the end of the east wing of the school, expansion of the cafeteria to include a new teachers' room, creation of several small group instruction areas, and new main offices This is a total of approximately 20,000 sq.ft.
2. **Renovations for Fire Code and ADA Accessibility:** These renovations are holdovers from the original building project. We must replace the moveable walls in the first grade complex, modify several toilets for ADA accessibility throughout the school, renovate the doorways in the east wing and the main entrances and modify the music room accessibility to the stage.
3. **Additional Renovations:** There are several major renovations to several sections of the school caused by the new construction and the revision of the classroom assignments.

The architect's estimate for building of the described project, including the completion of the ADA and Fire Code renovations, the addition of the 5 new classrooms, the specified education-value renovations, and all fees and bonding costs, will total \$6,100,000. We understand that, based on current information, the state funding would comprise

approximately 24.2% of the total cost of the project. Thus the distribution of costs would be as follows:

State of Connecticut	\$1,476,200
Town of Kent	4,623,800

This building project is described in more detail in APPENDIX A, along with the proposed Floor Plan in APPENDIX B. Cost analysis is found in APPENDIX C.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Kent Board of Education, at their regular meeting on April 1, 1999, unanimously adopted the report of the Town-Wide KCS Building Planning Committee and agreed to forward this report to the Board of Selectmen for their consideration and necessary action. It is important to note that the Building Planning Committee, with its diverse membership had unanimously adopted the Project Summary Report that was forwarded to the Board of Education.

It is requested of the Board of Selectmen that they take the required steps to authorize the Superintendent of Region 1 to submit an application to the State Department of Education no later than June 30, 1999, for state funding of this building project. This will enable the state legislature to include this project in the bonding legislation for the year 2000 approval. Should this be approved by the state, the Town of Kent can determine in Town Meeting whether to go forward with this project with a completion date of September 2002. It is important to note that the submission of this application for state funding does NOT commit the Town of Kent to undertake this building project. During the year in which this application is processed in the State Legislature, the Selectmen of the Town of Kent and the Building Committee that they will appoint, can study and determine the feasibility of going forward with this project. Upon affirmative decision, a Town Meeting must then be called for the electors of the Town of Kent to approve of the local funding of this project. Any state funding commitment will stand for two years during which time the town must take action, or the state commitment will be withdrawn.

The required steps by the Board of Selectmen are as follows (as outlined by Superintendent John O'Brien in memo to this committee dated March 11, 1999):

1. Vote on the project, and a copy of the minutes of the vote- certified by the Town Clerk - must be attached to the Project Application (ED 049)
2. Vote to authorize the formulation of educational specifications for the proposed project and these also accompany the ED 049. (These Educational Specifications are already described in par. 3 in this report.)
3. Vote to establish a Building Committee for the proposed project. (This will be the committee that, if the project is undertaken, will carry it through to completion.)
4. Vote to authorize the filing of the Project Application (ED 049)

NOTE: The Board of Selectmen will have approximately two months to consider this matter and act in a timely fashion to provide approval for the June 30th filing of the application by Supt. O'Brien. If the approval by the Board of Selectmen does not occur by early in June, the project will be delayed for one full year.

Should this go forward as requested, the following is a possible scenario for the school year 1999/2000.

Board of Education works with the Board of Finance to determine where funding for architectural fees for additional preliminary design and Town Meeting presentation costs will be lodged.

We recommend that the new Building Committee engage a state approved population consultant to review the state's student population projections in the light of known local factors to determine if state funding percentage can be enhanced.

We recommend that the new Building Committee engage a qualified, independent professional engineering source to review the architect's estimated construction costs for ultimate presentation to the Town Meeting.

The Board of Selectmen will have to determine when to call a Town Meeting to consider approval of this project. At such a meeting, consideration could be given to authorization of immediate funding for preparation of final plans and specifications by the Architect. so that, after state approval, an early solicitation of bids could, perhaps, bring a more competitive cost for the project. Such a Town Meeting scheduled in late fall or early winter, 1999, would be ideal.

Under this schedule, the project could go out for bid during the late fall of 2000, for start of construction in the spring of 2001. Much of the renovation work will have to be done during summer vacation and two summers will be required. Under carefully spelled out restrictions, new construction can take place during the school year to enable the project to be completed by September, 2002.

6. APPENDIX A -- CONSTRUCTION PLAN RENOVATIONS AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

1.) Renovations for Fire Code and ADA Accessibility

- Replace the moveable walls in the current first and second grade complex with permanent walls. Besides being ADA inaccessible, these rooms do not have appropriate egress.
- Modify two of the four toilets in the first and second grade complex for ADA accessibility.
- Modify both toilets in the current third grade enclosure for ADA accessibility.
- Renovate the gym locker rooms to provide ADA accessible bathrooms for boys and girls, men and women.
- Renovate boys and girls lavatories on either side of the art room for ADA accessibility.
- Replace doorways in east wing to meet ADA accessibility requirements.
- Renovate the main entrances for ADA accessibility.
- Modify the entrance to the stage and music room to provide a chairlift for ADA accessibility and compliant stairs from the music room.
- Remove the current doorway and stairs from the music room to the stage.
- Complete masonry closure of corridor walls, above the current walls, in the east wing and the current main office area, including removal of glass walls in office.

2.) Additional Renovations

- Remove the offices in the common room in the current first and second grade complex to create a useable multi-purpose space. (primary grades general purpose area and auditorium). Add a small raised platform at the south end.
- Remove old gym office and add windows as part of cafeteria expansion.
- Combine the current offices for the home-school liaison and foreign language teachers to create a new office and instruction space for the speech therapist.
- Renovate the current science rooms in the east wing to provide a standard classroom, a language arts classroom, and a custodial storage and work area.
- Renovate the current computer room to provide a standard classroom.
- Renovate the existing library/media center to provide a library workroom, the library main desk area, and an appropriate entrance space as part of the expansion of the library/media center.
- Renovate the current main office area to provide office space for the school psychologist, home-school liaison, and school volunteers.
- Renovate the adult bathroom at the main entrance to become an expanded custodial space.

3.) New Construction

- Build and renovate in the office area between the two front entrances to provide a new main office area including Principal's office, secretaries office, conference room, waiting room, and mail area.
- Build two new storage and receiving areas in the region of the front shed, modifying the smaller front entrance to allow proper ADA access.
- Build a new canopy and front driveway.

- Add a new computer room just south of the library/media center, modifying the side entrance to provide an indoor corridor. Add an office, storage, and a new electronic hub. Rewire network to provide correct connections.
- Expand the library/media center to include story telling area, expanded reference center, and expanded research space allowing multiple classes to utilize the space simultaneously.
- Expand the cafeteria adding new seating area and a new teacher’s room.
- Add a new gym office, gym storage, and a small bleacher section.
- Build new addition to the existing southern end of the east wing (middle school corridor) to include:
 - two new science rooms with appropriate lab equipment, network connections, preparation area, and solar space
 - a small group instruction room for the Title 1 teacher
 - two new standard classrooms
 - audio/visual room with office space for the technology assistant
 - new bathrooms for the east wing for boys and girls, men and women
 - exiting corridor, with appropriate flooring for athletic shoes
 - storage area for outdoor custodial equipment
- Prepare and rebuild site areas effected by construction, adding new parking, providing school bus access, and restoring playground structures removed during construction.

4.) Construction Space

New Construction	20,600	square feet
Renovation	15,700	square feet
Unrenovated	32,791	square feet
Total Space	69,091	square feet

APPENDIX B -- PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN

(copyright property of initial architect)

APPENDIX C -- POPULATION PROJECTIONS

1.) State Projections

The State Department of Education has provided projections of student enrollment for Kent Center School up to the school year 2010-2011. These projections are based on current student enrollment, current birthrates, past migration of students into and out of the school system, and projected future birthrates. The source is Peter Prowda, an education consultant with the State Department of Education. The latest projections are dated November 30, 1998. Note that the past migration of students over the last eight years has been near zero and is just now starting to increase (1.009 weighted five year average). Also, note that the projected future birthrates, from our education reference group, are near zero. This projection peaks at 367 in the school year 2002-03 and then drops to approximately the current population of 340. This projection makes a good lower bound because of its assumption of near zero growth in the migration and birthrates.

2.) Specific Local Projections

To get an upper bound, we can add known, foreseeable growth that might be considered exceptional. These specific projections add: 1% growth in migration due to random housing starts, additional child births from new teachers at both Kent and Kent Center School (already in progress), new children from the housing project on Elizabeth Street, new children from employees for Cyberian Outpost who move into Kent, new children from affordable housing (1 house/2 years).

The specific projections, using local knowledge added to the state projections, show the school population rising to approximately 390 and staying at that number. The actual population is likely to be between these figures unless an unforeseeable population change occurs, positive or negative.

3.) Risk Assessment

The risk of building an addition to Kent Center School arises from its landlocked position. The school is bounded by the Elizabeth Street housing project on the east, the playing fields, owned by Kent School and leased by the town, on the south, the Housatonic River on the west, and Judd Avenue with private homes on the north. The proposed addition would use the last remaining space, leaving little option for further expansion. Attempting to use a second floor is deemed too expensive given the changes necessary in the current construction, and the need for stairs and an elevator for a small second floor area. Therefore, the addition of the 5 new classrooms in the present proposal would have to suffice for some time.

In order to assess the risk, the distribution of grade size was determined. This distribution was extended to an overall projection of 400 students, assuming 10 in pre-kindergarten. This gives an average of 43.3 students per grade. For this distribution, the likelihood of a single grade exceeding 50 students is approximately 10%. Of the 5 classrooms in the proposed addition, one would be used for foreign language, but the rest could be used for overflow. Thus five grades of greater than 50 students each would exceed the thus expanded school's capacity. The likelihood of such an occurrence with 400 students is

less than 1%. Even if the current or future Board of Education decides to use one of the classrooms for an extra Kindergarten, the likelihood of four grades of greater 50 students is still less than 2%. These risks seem acceptable.

The proposed addition should contain the educational needs of Kent for the foreseeable future. The other option, the building of a new school building, is not likely to occur.

APPENDIX D -- PROJECT COST ANALYSIS

1.) C J Lawler Associates 2/15/99

Renovations for Fire Code and Accessibility	450,000
Additional Renovations	500,000
New Construction	3,750,000
Survey, Borings, Test Pits, Material Testing, Printing	75,000
Bonding & Legal Costs	200,000
A & E fees	500,000
Project Contingency	600,000
 Bonded Total	 \$6,100,000

2.) Estimated State Reimbursement

The current rate of reimbursement from the State of Connecticut for school building projects in Kent, Connecticut is 32.86% for 98-99 and is expected to be 32.5% for 99-00. (source: Region 1 Business Office) However, this rate is modified by the actual square footage being built compared to the minimum amount in State specifications. The State Standard Space Specifications (source: C J Lawler copy) give the average square feet per pupil for a K-8 school with 350-750 enrollment as 140 square feet. This average is then multiplied by the highest projected enrollment for the eight year period immediately following submission of Application of Proposed School Building Project. The highest projected enrollment in the State Projections is 367 students in 02-03. The State will therefore reimburse for school space up to 51,380 square feet. The actual size of the school following the proposed addition and renovation is 69,091 square feet. Therefore the State level of reimbursement is expected to be:

$$\frac{51,380}{69,091} \times 32.5\% = 24.2$$

When this is combined with the estimated project cost, the State of Connecticut should reimburse \$1,476,200, approximately, leaving \$4,623,800 as Kent's share of the cost. All of these calculations are dependent on actual costs of the project and the actual State reimbursement rate in the year of Application. The projected number of students can be increased with local knowledge, if such exists, by hiring a State approved consultant to provide new projections. The estimated cost of the consultant is \$10,000; the return on an increased projection of 10 students in the peak year is \$38,271. This is recommended.

3.) The total space for which the State will reimburse can also be increased for specific conditions. However, the difference between State Standard Space Specifications and space at Kent Center School is harder to quantify. No allowance is given for the larger classrooms in older schools, classrooms originally designed for larger class sizes. Again, by hiring a State approved consultant, we may be able to justify a larger space for reimbursement, but the monetary return is harder to calculate. The return is approximately \$26,000 per 1000 square feet. This is not recommended.

4.) For prudence sake, the Town Building Committee should have the construction estimate recalculated by an independent engineering source, and the appropriate town agencies should determine the bonding costs and carrying costs for the required

borrowing. The Board of Education should determine the estimated increase in operating costs of the expanded building and educational activities. This should all be done prior to presentation at a Town Meeting.

APPENDIX E -- TIME TABLE

1) Ideal Scenario

April - May, 1999 - Board of Selectmen accepts recommendations of Board of Education. Appoints a Building Committee.
Building Committee reviews Educational Specifications as submitted by Board of Education.

Board of Selectmen approve submission of Application to State Department of Education by Superintendent John O'Brien in timely fashion.

June 30, 1999 - Superintendent O'Brien has submitted application for KCS project to Facilities Unit, State Dept. of Education.

Sept, 1999 - Board of Education and Board of Finance determine funding, and source of funding, required by Architect for additional preliminary design and presentation of project to Kent Town Meeting .

November, December, 1999 - Board of Selectmen call Town Meeting to consider approval of KCS Building project. Town Meeting approves project and also immediate funding for Architect fees for final drawings and specifications in preparation for contractor bids.

January - May, 2000 - Architect prepares final plans and specifications .

May 30, 2000 - State Legislature approves funding for project.

Summer 2000 - State Facilities Unit reviews plans and specifications

September, 2000 - State approval of plans and specifications

October, 2000 - Project out for bids.

December, 2000 - Contract awarded

March, 2001 - Construction begins

September 2002 - project complete - KCS uses new facilities.

The Town Wide Building Committee recommends the following schedule to the Board of Education in order to occupy the new school in September 2002.

The Superintendent of Region I must submit an application to the State Department of Education by June 30, 1999. In order to do this the Town must do the following:

1. The Kent Center School Board of Education must accept this report, or modify it if they wish.
2. The Board must present to the Board of Selectmen their recommendations for this school construction project. (To be submitted for their meeting of April 6, 1999.)
3. The Selectmen must vote on the project and a copy of the minutes (certified by the Town Clerk) must be attached to the application. (ED 049).
4. The Selectmen must vote to authorize the formulation of educational specifications for the proposed project and these also must accompany the ED 049. (The Educational Specifications section of this report provides the needed information.)
5. The Selectmen must vote to establish a Building Committee for the proposed project
6. The Selectmen must vote to authorize the filing of the Project Application.(ED 049

It is important to note that these recommendations are intended to authorize the Superintendent to submit the application prior to June 30, 1999. If this deadline is not met, the consideration by the State will be delayed **one full year**.

The Board of Selectmen, The Board of Finance and the Board of Education should understand that the submission of this application does not obligate that the project ever take place.