



ELIZABETH FORWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT

401 Rock Run Road, Elizabeth, PA 15037-2416 • 412-896-2310 • FAX: 412-751-9483 • www.efsd.net

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Scott Henry
412.523-3010
shenry@efsd.net

ELIZABETH FORWARD SCHOOL BOARD AWARDS FIVE CONTRACTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL RECONSTRUCTION

Total cost for construction of phase one of high school renovations to be \$67,435,000 with insurance reimbursements to cover a significant percentage.

ELIZABETH, PA – July 17, 2024 – The Elizabeth Forward School Board of Directors approved five construction contracts that will renovate and rebuild Elizabeth Forward High School due to a devastating fire that destroyed the auditorium and significantly impacted and degraded the building's physical infrastructure, including its boilers and electrical service.

The awarded contracts were granted to Rycon Construction for general construction services, First American Industries for plumbing, Vrabel Plumbing for school fire protection, Moses Electric for electrical services, and Lugalia Mechanical for HVAC upgrades to the building. As required, each of the contractors the Board approved was the lowest responsible bidder

The current high school was built in 1957, and renovations occurred in the 1970s and 1990s. The selected contractors will work together on major renovations, including constructing a physical plant for all mechanical and utility services, a state-of-the-art auditorium with adjacent band and choral rooms, a new gymnasium and locker rooms, and a new main entrance and lobby. Exterior improvements to the front of the high school's façade will include new brick, windows, and energy-efficient metal panels. As part of the construction, the entire building will be upgraded to meet today's building codes, including fire protection sprinkler systems, new electrical systems, and HVAC, including air conditioning.

The total cost of construction is expected to be \$52,927,000 with an additional \$14,508,000 earmarked for project contingencies, new furniture, audiovisual equipment, IT infrastructure, project costs, permits, fees, and testing and inspections.

The district expects a significant portion of the construction to be paid for by insurance due to the significant loss. Additionally, the school district has applied and will continue to apply for state grants to offset the costs of construction. Finally, the school district will leverage a healthy fund balance along with bonds to finance the remaining balance.

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“This is a major decision that this board is not taking lightly, but it should be noted that this decision is the result of hard work conducted over the past 17 months since the fire. Tonight, we begin a new chapter in the history of our great school district,” said Mr. Thomas Sharkey, Elizabeth Forward School Board president. “We have made smart fiscal decisions over the past decade that afford us the opportunity to build our high school back better than it was before. With insurance payouts, we can rebuild at a significant discount and improve upon a well-constructed building.”

“On February 12, 2023, this school district faced one of its darkest days when we suffered a devastating fire that destroyed our high school auditorium,” said Mr. Keith Konyk, superintendent of Elizabeth Forward School District. “That unforeseen tragedy forced us to take a long hard look at the facilities and how we can make improvements. We do not want to endure something like this ever again.”

“Tonight’s vote to rebuild and renovate our high school creates tremendous opportunities for generations of Elizabeth Forward students,” added Mr. Konyk. “This building, when it’s complete, will be a centerpiece of this community with an auditorium and gymnasium that will bring this community together as well serve as a destination for other communities.”

“We are taking the first step in ensuring that our facilities match the quality of education that our students currently receive. Each of these contractors are reputable companies and we have assembled a highly collaborative team with McLean Architects and Mascon Corporation to oversee this project,” continued Mr. Konyk. “Our primary mission is to provide every student with a high-quality education, renovating the high school will ensure this is happening in the best environment.”

“I want to personally thank all of our school board directors for making a significant down payment on the future of this school district,” added Mr. Sharkey. “These are not easy decisions or easy votes, but tonight, we made a huge impact on the lives of future Elizabeth Forward students and provided our faculty and staff with a better and safer work environment.”

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