

During May's school board meeting we took a walk through our aging high school. While our maintenance staff does a great job, there does come a point where maintenance becomes very significant and replacement needs to be considered. While we are not at a point to where we need to replace the high school yet, it would be good to have a plan in place as to the direction of the school district in the future so we know if we should make minor repairs to keep the building operational in the short-term, or if we should do major repairs to plan to be in the high school for a long time.

Commercial buildings are typically planned for a useful life of 50-60 years. We have the original 1915 section, 1920's, 1950's 1960's and our new commons in 1995. There has been some major remodeling in the past to extend the life of the buildings and soon there will be more major repairs needed if we are looking for additional long-term use. The difficult part is determining if it is worth spending a lot of money to make major repairs or spend some more and just build new.

However, due to our low property valuation in the district, we legally can't borrow enough money to build an entirely new building. So, if we were to build, an option may be to keep the gym, commons and metals shop, build a three story structure east of the gym and demolish the remainder of the building, followed by adding a new wood shop area.

There is another option besides major remodeling or building, and that is to develop a "whole grade sharing" situation where we send our 6th – 12th grade students to another district for their academics, but keep our own extra-curricular programs. There is no right or wrong answer to any of these scenarios, but there are definitely pros and cons to each. Please feel free to share your thoughts with a board member or administrator as we begin this long-term planning process.