

Community Committee to Advise on Haddonfield School Facilities

Haddonfield's superintendent of schools has announced that he will form a community committee to provide advisory input with respect to the maintenance and repair of public school buildings and facilities.

The role of the Advisory Committee on Facilities will include suggesting priorities for ongoing and special repairs and maintenance.

Superintendent Richard Perry said the board of education has made a commitment, within the context of the upcoming referendum, to hire a part-time professional with expertise in school construction, to conduct weekly walk-throughs of district facilities and work with maintenance staff to develop cost-effective solutions to problems as they arise.

"This person will be key to helping us develop a program of prevention to protect the community's significant investment," Perry said.

Perry said he envisions that the advisory committee will begin its work by developing a job description for the part-time professional. While reporting to the superintendent, the "facilities monitor" (a job title has not yet been set) would also meet with the advisory committee on a regular basis for two-way discussions about needs and priorities.

The "monitor" position is different from that of construction manager, an outside firm that would oversee work carried out under contracts for repairs and maintenance that are the subject of the bond referendum on March 8. Its task would be to ensure that plans for the projects are appropriate and cost-effective, and that contractors carry out their work according to specifications.

"Haddonfield is blessed to have a large pool of residents who care deeply about their community and who are willing to contribute their time and talent, as volunteers, to make it better," Perry said.

Perry said that throughout the process of formulating this bond proposal, the board of education has had the benefit of input from a number of residents, some of whom have special expertise. Members of the Long-Range Planning Committee, which oversees school facilities and developed the bond proposals, held a number of meetings with concerned residents, shared documents and photographs, and arranged for behind-the-scenes tours of school facilities.

"Suggestions and recommendations offered by those residents helped the Long-Range Planning Committee hone the scope of its proposals," Perry said. "That was very helpful. Now we want to move to the next step and formalize the relationships, by forming an advisory committee."

Details about the composition of the committee have not been announced, but Perry said he would issue an open invitation for expressions of interest, rather than simply appoint the committee members himself.