

Project Narrative  
New Fairfield High School  
54 Gillotti Road

### *Overall Project Description*

The project includes the construction of a new high school and the partial demolition of the existing high school building attached to the middle school. In the final condition, the middle school and high school will be separate buildings connected by a pedestrian plaza. The proposed project spans not only the existing property but also the adjacent residential properties as 74 and 78 Gillotti Road. No work is proposed in the athletic fields or the two surface lots near the stadium. The existing high school, adjacent to the middle school, will be in use until the new high school is completed.

### *Site Description*

Site access is via three driveways. The existing easternmost driveway will remain as-is. The westernmost driveway will be shifted east to increase the site lines, and will be expanded to a full-movement driveway and a new exit-only drive is proposed to the east, as shown on the site plans. The locations and design of these driveways serve to enhance improved vehicular circulation through the site. The revised bus and parent drop-off/pick-up locations are accessible via the eastern driveway. The drop-offs have been separated and a one-way drive will increase the efficiency of the process. A median and fence separate the two drop-off areas with raised crosswalks to provide safe locations for pedestrians to cross. Visitor parking is provided within this area as well. A new parking lot to the south of the high school as well as to the north of the middle school will provide parking for faculty, visitors and select high school students and offsets the parking lost in the siting of the proposed high school. Reinforced turf parking areas are proposed to provide overflow parking for the school campus for events.

The plaza area serves as a pedestrian gathering and circulation space between the two schools, creating a more campus-like feel. Seating, via repurposed stone wall boulders and new benches will be provided. Vehicular access to the existing middle school loading dock has been incorporated into the plaza design. An outdoor seating and classroom area adjacent to the dining commons of the high school is proposed as well as a stair and ramp to the middle school faculty parking lot, though an enhanced entrance is also proposed at the existing lower-level door to the middle school.

There is significant existing grade change across the site. The building has been designed to work into the grades, and the site design provides vehicular and pedestrian access to the various building levels. ADA access to the pedestrian entrances and through the plaza is proposed. Stormwater runoff will be managed through underground detention systems, designed in accordance with local regulations, and will outlet into the existing wetlands on the west/northwest side of the campus.

All new utilities are proposed for the high school. Electric and telecom service that currently enters the site via the utility pole on Gillotti Road is proposed to be maintained

though routing through the site will be adjusted to accommodate the new plan. A new pump house and water storage tanks for fire and domestic water service is proposed. Sanitary sewer will be connected to the existing leaching field, though piping will be modified as part of the project.

### *Building Design*

The existing High School program will be relocated to a new 146,000 SF building adjacent to the current building. Once the new facility is operational, the original High School classroom wing and auditorium will be demolished. The original gymnasium and natatorium will remain, with limited renovation to the locker rooms for accessibility. And the original cafeteria is being evaluated for possible conversion into district central administration offices.

Due to the existing slope of the site, the building will have three stories, with entry on two levels; the main entrance will be on the middle level from the central plaza, across from the Middle School, and entry on the middle story, while a secondary entry will be available on the lower level. These two circulation flows unit in a central core around which the building is organized, which includes the Dining Commons and the Learning Commons. Entries to the Gymnasium, Auditorium, and Event Center all front this central Commons.

The academic core spaces are in a three-story wing parallel with Gillotti Road. There are a number of central Learning Neighborhoods that are cross-disciplinary, combining science and general classrooms with faculty collaboration, breakout, seminar and conference spaces, and special education resource rooms. Career Technical Education (CTE) is also integrated with the inclusion of Project Areas for collaboration between specialties.

There is a strong connection at the middle level to the Learning Commons, making it readily accessible from all of the Learning Neighborhoods. The Design Lab and Media Production Lab both connect directly with the Learning Commons to more fully integrate that technology into student studies.

A performing arts wing, located behind the stage, provides direct access to both the Auditorium. The program includes Instrumental and Vocal rooms, and practice rooms. The Construction Lab, part of CTE, is in this area of the building with direct access to loading, and through connection directly to the stage for set construction.

### *Building Envelope*

The new High School will reflect the existing building's masonry construction but will not emulate the patterning. A more subdued material palette of ground-face CMU and metal

panel will be used and vertical slots of aluminum storefront and curtainwall will provide daylight deep within the building footprint. The main entrance canopy will be highlighted with elements of wood composite panel.