

A NEW BUILDING FOR THE CRANBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Benefits and Implications for the Cranbury School

Background

The Cranbury School and the Cranbury Public Library have enjoyed more than 75 years of combined history and space, first in the old School Building, and then moving to the current shared space in 1968. For many years, the combined space has adequately served the community due to the shared goals:

- Both the School and the Public Library support education and life-long learning.
- Good schools and good public libraries support real estate property values.
- Good school libraries are proven enhancements to good schools and support student achievement, based many studies.

However, the combined space is no longer meeting the needs of both the school population and the community:

- Both the town and school size have more than doubled in size since 1968.
- Findings of a Public Library Needs Assessment Report completed in 2007 show that the current space is inadequate for both the public library and the school library.
- Though both the school and the library board have addressed security in the shared space since the 2007 report, security in the library does not match the same standard of the rest of the school.
- Schools and public libraries have different security and access models, as well as different emergency procedures.
- The Cranbury Library Foundation has secured \$1.4 MM of the required \$3.2 MM to build and furnish the new public library on the space allocated on the township Master Plan. The current target is to break ground in 2015 and vacate the combined school space during the 2015-2016 school year.

Benefits

When the Cranbury Public Library moves into the new space, the Cranbury School will have several benefits:

- **Additional square footage.** The school library will gain additional open space where the Gambino Room, adult books, and reading areas are now located.
- **Single security model.** A single set of security procedures can be implemented for the space that is compliant with NJ State mandate and will result in consistent security procedures throughout all of the Cranbury School facility.
- **Un-escorted student and teacher access.** The school library space can be open and available for teacher and student use before school and during lunch/study periods.
- **Collection expansion.** The school will have sufficient space and shelving to upgrade its school library collection, curriculum, and research services to NJ state-mandated academic standards.
- **Expanded school library services.** The school may freely improve the school library services in the current space to support the Blue Ribbon level of education for our town.

- **Flexible programming.** The school will have the flexibility to use all the library space to offer after-school study programs, group study sessions, B.A.S.C., and school clubs in the school library.

Implications

Immediately, there are minimal costs to Cranbury School to maintain the current functional service of the shared space into a school-only space after the public library vacates the space. However, if the Cranbury School would like to upgrade the technology or physical space, that could require additional budget-line items.

- **Cost-neutral operating costs.** The current Public Library facility-usage fee paid to the Cranbury School is formulated on the utilities and janitorial costs required to operate the public library during evenings, weekends, holidays, and summer vacation. Once the public library is no longer in the shared space, the Cranbury School utilities and janitorial costs are expected to be reduced accordingly, being cost-neutral for the Cranbury School budget.
- **Space and furnishings improvements.** Though not required, the school may want to update the space and furnishings that will be vacated by the public library (stacks, library racks). These would need to be budgeted for in the 2015-16 or 2016-17 school budget.
- **Technology improvements.** If the Cranbury School would like to upgrade technology for the space, that would be need to be budgeted for in the 2015-16 or 2016-17 school budget.
- **No change to dismissal procedures.** Currently, dismissal to the public library is not an approved dismissal method for students at the Cranbury School, so this will not require a procedure change.
- **Acceptable pedestrian route.** Even though the public library is not an approved dismissal method for Cranbury School students, it is expected that students will be using the new Public Library facility. The Cranbury School should provide guidance to students on appropriate pedestrian pathways between the School and the Public Library.
- **Traffic patterns - emergency access only.** When Park Place is extended, the latest Master Plan revisions show Park Place terminating at the school/township parking lot. The current plan is that this connection is maintained only as a pedestrian/bike connection, with an option to remove bollards for emergency access only. This would result in no net change to traffic flow for the school/township complex.