



Ted Shriver, of Williamson Shriver Architects, led Monday's Upshur County BOE public hearing regarding the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan meeting. Shriver said the plan basically calls for a new Buckhannon-Upshur High School to be constructed, for the Buckhannon-Upshur Middle School to move into the former B-UHS building with upgrades and to renovate and add additions as needed to the elementary schools.

Brand new high school, converted middle school top priorities in approved CEFP

BUCKHANNON – School administrators, staff and concerned community members attended Monday's Upshur County Board of Education public hearing regarding the Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan, or the CEFP, which BOE members approved unanimously after hearing input regarding the plan.

The CEFP proposes that Upshur County build a new high school and convert the current high school into a middle school. The last part of the plan proposes renovations and additions to some of the elementary schools to allow for STEM learning, wellness areas, fine arts space and pre-K classrooms at each school.

Ted Shriver, of Williamson Shriver Architects, said the CEFP will chart the course for Upshur County Schools through 2030.

“This is required for each of the 55 school systems in West Virginia every 10 years,” he said. “The CEFP includes but is not limited to grade configurations, enrollment history, enrollment projections, enrollment sizes per school, the number of schools that can be operated in the school budget and the conditions of schools. Ultimately, the CEFP must be approved by this Board of Education, the West Virginia State Board of Education and the School Building Authority of West Virginia.”

Shriver said a CEFP is required before funds can be requested through the West Virginia School Building Authority. He explained to complete this CEFP, a steering committee was formed and one item among several the committee reviewed was the previous 10-year plan, which expires in December 2020.

“They had to review to previous goals and provide [revised] goals and objectives; review the community changes as it related to the entire community and the educational aspect; review historical projections and historical enrollment along with the projected enrollment, which was provided by the WV State Board of Education,” Shriver said. “The next topic was the educational plan, which was comprised of the system, the curriculum, the instruction, the operation within the plan.”

Shriver said the CEFP is developed by having the curriculum first, and that is what drives the facility needs. He said prior to the steering committee’s work, the architect team had to evaluate all of Upshur County Schools’ existing facilities and determine required improvements and associated costs to bring the buildings into compliance with the SBA and W.Va. Building Codes and Standards.

Meeting these objectives completed phase one of the CEFP.

“Phase two went back to the committee and started the ‘translating’ part of the process,” Shriver shared. “That takes my evaluations, all of the phase one documents talking about curriculum and determines what should happen to the facilities.”

He said the translating part took into consideration the age of facilities, the number of additions and the cost to improve the facilities as it relates to replacement cost, along with the county’s budget to operate the facilities over the next 10 years.

“Lastly, we had to look at the finance plan to determine how these projects could be funded,” Shriver said.

Shriver worked with finance director Jeffrey Perkins and the finance committee to determine the percentage that could come from Upshur County Schools on each project, whether potential financing involved a bond issue, a local match to the SBA needs grant or an SBA MIP grant.

“The entire CEFPP is very fluid. As things change, now that the CEFPP is an electronic document, you can do an amendment to change that plan,” Shriver explained.

Shriver said the main goal of the CEFPP for Upshur County Schools is to provide equal opportunities for all students in Upshur County.

“Ultimately, what the committee determined was to build a new Buckhannon-Upshur High School and convert the former Buckhannon-Upshur High School into a middle school,” Shriver said. “Those were deemed as the number one priorities by the committee. Then, the next priority number was for Tennerton, Rock Cave, Union, Hodgesville, Buckhannon Academy, French Creek and Washington District elementary schools, which all have needed additions and renovations.”

Shriver said some of those additions would be to add a pre-K, add a fine arts or STEM space and add wellness spaces.

Upshur County BOE member Dr. Greenbrier Almond asked Shriver if COVID-19 was factored into the classroom size and space plan for the CEFPP. Shriver said it had not been because the first phases were completed prior to COVID.

Sarah Wamsley, CTE/Chairperson and instructor at B-UHS said she thought the CEFPP was satisfactory overall.



Sarah Wamsley, CTE instructor and committee chairperson at B-UHS, reminded folks that B-UHS is a comprehensive career and technical high school during Monday's public hearing for the CEFP.

"The things that bothered me were that Fred Eberle Technical Center was really emphasized in there, but B-UHS is a comprehensive career and technical high school, and we were not equal there," Wamsley said. "We offer agriculture classes, childcare and business classes. I do not think every class needs to be stated but just a picture to show that we are a comprehensive career and technical high school and that both Fred Eberle and B-UHS both need to grow. When the SBA looks at this document, I want them to think we have Fred Eberle and all of those CTE programs at B-UHS because the ones at B-UHS are just as awesome."

Buckhannon-Upshur Middle School Principal Michael Lynch was the next to address the BOE. Lynch said he wanted to advocate for a new middle school.

"The school that we have is grossly inadequate," Lynch said. "We are promoting careers and project-based learning and use of technology is a common tool in our classrooms. We have done a lot of work to the school. I would like to advocate for

a new middle school – it’s one of the largest in the state, and I think the county deserves a new middle school.”



Buckhannon-Upshur Middle School Principal Michael Lynch addressed the BOE during the special hearing of the CEFPP and said he was advocating for a new middle school in the county, which would take into account the new STEM, project-based learning and career and technical classes at the middle school.

Next, Don Nestor, President of Foundation for Better Schools in Upshur County, said he had a question.

“As we all adjust to COVID, what I see out there is other people are adjusting how they do business,” Nestor said. “As we adjust to how we adjust business, can we adjust the facilities plan? If the SBA approves it, are we locked into that plan that may not be adjusted for the remote-type of presentation of learning? I see people looking at smaller facilities, and can we adjust when we see where it is going?”



Don Nestor, President of the Foundation for Better Schools in Upshur County, reminded folks that the way education is delivered has changed and asked what effect that will have on the CEFP. Nestor pointed out some places are downsizing and asked how that affects plans for space in new schools.

Shriver addressed Nestor's question and said the CEFP is very fluid.

"I do not want to minimize what is in the CEFP. It results in a new high school, a middle school at this facility (B-UHS) and additions and renovations at the elementary schools," Shriver replied. "It does not say specifically what is in those schools. So, if you are going for SBA funds, there is a formula for you to utilize. If you put a bond issue with it, you can enhance what they say over and above with the funds."

"All facilities, whether they are renovations or new, have to follow the policies and procedures by the SBA as well as Policy 6200," he continued. "Those are minimum standards, so anything that Upshur County Schools wants to do, while we are in the committee meetings of planning for a new school or addition, all of those topics will come up."

Committee Chairperson Vanessa Perkins said she wanted the community to know the administration and the committee members worked hard to address all the issues and concerns people had.



Vanessa Perkins explains the work that went into the CEFP by Upshur County Schools Administration and the steering committee. Perkins said the goal is to offer Upshur County students the same learning experience and environment across the county with technology that is up-to-date.

“Our plan was as we improve our facilities, they will be improved to the technology and be way better for our kids,” Perkins said. “I think Dr. (Sara Lewis) Stankus, (Superintendent of Upshur County Schools) and her staff are adamant about improving our technology, especially with the Apples and Apple TVs in our facilities.”

“I am sure the facilities we will have in the future in Buckhannon will meet, if not exceed, the needs of them in our community,” she added. “It is going to improve STEM and CTE learning and the community has stressed how they want our children to learn and be in an environment like other kids throughout the state, and I think Upshur County is trying hard to make that happen through this process. I really feel we are moving in the right direction.”

Union Elementary School Principal Michelle Fleming thanked the committee for helping get approval for a new roof at Union Elementary School.

“I appreciate the maintenance over the years that kept a roof over our heads,” Fleming said. “I want to thank all those for the energy efficiency alone that will be at our school and allowing us to continue the high quality of education we are able to do at Union Elementary School.”



Union Elementary School Principal Michelle Fleming thanks the BOE and steering committee for help for funding to provide a new roof on Union Elementary School.

Jonathan Pollock, B-UHS Principal, thanked the BOE and those working on the CEFP.

“It’s nice to hear the plans you have for the high school,” Pollock said. “I would like to add on to Mrs. Wamsley’s comments and say it would be a goal of mine to lead the new building with expansive CTE as we move forward.”

BOE President Dr. Tammy Samples said she thought it would be a good idea to include all the comments from the public hearing in the CEFP document. Almond made a motion to approve the CEFP since it is a fluid document and can be amended.

BOE members voted unanimously to approve the CEF. BOE member Pat Long was not present at Monday's special meeting and Kristi Wilkerson attended the meeting virtually.

The next regular meeting of the Upshur County BOE is scheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020 at Washington District Elementary School.