

Beecher High school Project Narrative

Beecher Community School District is a public school district in Genesee County in the state of Michigan and in the Genesee Intermediate School District. It serves the community of Beecher which is just north of Flint. Beecher Community School District offers pre K-12 education to students of diverse cultures. We emphasize the social, emotional, physical, intellectual development of each child and strive to instill high standards for academic integrity and leadership in our students. Through our programs, students are given the technology, skills and knowledge to be successful members of our school community and a global society.

Historically, the community is most famous for one of the deadliest tornadoes in U.S. history in 1953 that killed 116 people. Students attended classes in buses until the high school was repaired. The construction of I-475 in the early 1970's in effect created a segregated community with those located within the loop being African American and those outside the loop Caucasian. Economically, the area was hit hard by the closing of General Motors plants and the exodus of many families led to decline in the value of housing and many homes becoming deserted and in poor condition.

The following plan will focus on the next five years and the intention of a renovated high school complex at the corner of Saginaw and Coldwater.

Building Plans

Currently, the district has two classroom buildings: Dailey Elementary (pre K-6) and Beecher High School (7-12), which previously housed only the middle school, and a third building, the Ira A. Rutherford Administration Building which houses district offices on the first floor, board room on second floor, and an alternative high school named the Beecher Higher Learning Academy on the third floor. This later building had been closed since 2012 until reopened in 2022.

The plans are to reopen the old Beecher High School on the corner of Saginaw and Coldwater, which closed in 2004 due to budget shortfalls and loss of enrollment. The district has contracted with a design firm to develop a plan to renovate, remodel and reopen the building as Beecher High School (9-12) featuring innovative spaces and programs focused on career pathways for our students. It is adjacent to the administration building, Lacey Fieldhouse (basketball, volleyball & wrestling) and Russ Reynolds Field (football & track) and adjacent baseball & softball fields, which would allow easy access for our high school students instead of traveling by bus from the current building. The current high school building would revert to a middle school and pull grades 5 & 6 from Dailey Elementary allowing for expanded room and offerings there as well.

Student Demographics

Our 638 students include 92.3% who are economically disadvantaged, 90.4% are African American and <10% white, mixed race and Hispanic. 13.7% of our students have disabilities and are among the poorest and highest need students in Genesee County and the state of Michigan.

Teacher and Staff Information

Beecher teachers salary and benefits expenditures are \$9,150 per student, which is down from a high of \$10,142 in 2013. Teacher attrition is high as teachers are leaving for higher paying positions in other districts. The district employs 40 full time teaching staff with just over 18% being long term substitutes due to the inability to fill the open positions. The student/teacher ratio is 20.1, which is higher than the state average of 18.2. Beecher teachers are also older with the higher percentage in the age range of 50-59. Construction of a new high school would make Beecher a destination location for both teachers and students.

Academic Achievement

Beecher has high academic needs as well. Prior pandemic scores on the M-STEP showed only 14.9% of students Proficient in English Language Arts at the End of Third Grade (compared w/45.1% statewide), an SAT score of 807.8 (compared w/985.1 statewide), and a 25% dropout rate (compared w/8.36% statewide). An emphasis on academic achievement would be highlighted in the renovation of the old high school focused on academic career pathways, while partnering with local colleges and vocational programs.

Board of Education

Beecher Community School District has a seven member Board of Education that exists for the purpose of providing a system of free, public education for children in grades K-12. The board members are elected by voters and endowed with the authority to make best judgments in determining policies, making decisions, and approving procedures for carrying out their responsibilities.

Athletic Achievement

Beecher does have a long and rich history of success in sports. This includes 8 state Class C titles in basketball, 5 in 6 years between 2012-2017; 10 titles in boys track; and numerous professional athletes including Carl Banks (NFL linebacker), Courtney Hawkins (NFL wide receiver), and Monte Morris (NBA guard). Beecher is known as the "Home of Champions" and is a magnet for families whose children have a goal of

collegiate and even professional success. Our current basketball coach was a standout athlete at Michigan State University and played professionally abroad. Success in sports though comes second to success in the classroom and that will always be the focus of the athletic program. A new academic building would allow us to achieve the vision and mission of the district stated below. Absent a new structure, the district will continue to struggle with competition from charter schools and other districts with newer buildings and more innovative technology and programs.

Vision Statement

Beecher Community School District is highly regarded for academic excellence, leadership, and contributions to improve the community which it serves.

Mission Statement

To deliver excellence in education while EMPOWERING students to be successful in every area of their lives.

Values

- We support the staff and remind our students that teachers and administrators are looking out for their best interest.
- We challenge all parents to be involved and support their child's educational experience.
- We believe that all students can be successful and reach their full potential.
- We honor classroom instruction and minimize classroom interruptions in order to maximize student learning.
- We develop each student educationally, socially, emotionally and physically.
- We conduct the business of education in a professional, ethical and legal manner.