Phase 1 construction for the $28,935,000 capital improvement project was completed after months of work at Cairo-Durham Elementary (CDE) and Cairo-Durham Middle/High School (MS/HS).

The project, which was approved by district voters in December 2018, is bringing interior and exterior improvements to both school campuses.* Nearly 65% of the cost is expected to be reimbursed through state building aid.

A primary goal of the project is to provide the school community with better facilities and equipment that align with current educational, technological and safety standards. In addition to upgrades at CDE, the project is restructuring the MS/HS campus so it is more useful to students, staff and the community.

“Our school district is the center of our community,” said Michael Wetherbee, Superintendent of Schools. “Not only does this project create a great sense of pride within our schools, but it is providing much needed upgrades that will allow for increased community access and enhanced educational facilities for our students.”

Highlights include classroom renovations, centralized services, community spaces, a new Media Center, more useful athletic facilities, parking improvements, air conditioning at CDE, and routine repairs and maintenance. See inside for more details.

The project is currently under budget due to lower than expected contractor bids. Therefore, the Board of Education is assessing the original scope of work to prioritize items that were excluded due to financial constraints. Read more on page 4.

* The project proposal included a garage and workshop at the Durham building to support career and technical education programs. It was removed from the scope of work after voters approved the donation of the building to Questar III BOCES in June 2020.
CAIRO-DURHAM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Transforming the Middle/High School

Cairo-Durham Middle/High School (MS/HS) underwent a significant transformation to enhance academics, building security, student services and the overall learning experience.

MODERN LEARNING SPACES

The project aims to strengthen academic programs by modernizing outdated instructional spaces so they reflect college and work environments. During Phase 1, the following learning spaces were updated to meet current educational needs:

- **Media Center.** Some classrooms in the A-wing were transformed into a state-of-the-art Media Center. The new space resembles a college library, with comfortable seating areas, new equipment and collaborative workspaces.

  Inside the Media Center: The Media Center has three “breakout” rooms and many comfortable seating areas where students can work collaboratively or independently. There is a long table with built-in charging ports for laptops as well as a section with five rows of Mac desktop computers. It has large shatterproof windows that increase the amount of natural light while maintaining structural integrity to ensure the safety of students and staff.

- **Distance Learning.** To accommodate the growing Distance Learning program at CDHS, some classrooms were converted into a large group instruction area where students will be able to collaborate with peers in school and from other regional schools online. Distance Learning allows our students to take a wide variety of courses that could not be offered in-house due to limited staff or course enrollment, such as American Sign Language and Computer Science.

- **Music Technology.** Classroom and office space behind the auditorium was renovated to serve the needs of Music Technology and other Music and Visual Arts programs. It includes a sound-proof room. The hands-on Music Technology course makes music more accessible for all students and provides an alternative option for earning music credit.
Outdated and deteriorating lab tables, cabinetry and seating from the 1970s will be replaced in two Science classrooms. Other renovations include updated wash stations, hazard hoods and adequate chemical storage.
Still to Come…

Phase 2A construction at Cairo-Durham Middle/High School is in progress. Phase 2B will occur through Summer 2022. These phases will upgrade additional classrooms and student services, and add a Fitness Center for school and community use.

PHASE 2A

The Health Office will be relocated to the center of the building from its current location in the middle school, making it more accessible for all students. A faculty workroom and hallway will be built next to the new Health Office.

The old high school main office, guidance office and faculty workroom will be converted into necessary I.T. and custodial storage areas, as well as new learning spaces that will accommodate various educational programs and needs.

The track will be resurfaced to repair cracks. These repairs should not interfere with the spring sports season. Field event areas will be relocated to allow adequate space in the inner field for use by the soccer and football teams.

PHASE 2B

After the Health Office is relocated, the area will be renovated to accommodate Pupil Personnel Services and Curriculum & Instruction. The new offices and meeting space will facilitate essential school functions related to special education, curriculum development and instruction.

Two high school Science classrooms that are original to the 1976 building will be renovated to provide students with better facilities and equipment that are in line with current educational, technological and safety standards (see pg. 3).

A high school Art/Technology room will be updated as well. This includes new ventilation and dust collection systems that will allow students to complete projects in a single workspace without needing to transport materials from another Tech room across campus. New sinks, cabinetry and work tables will be installed.

A Fitness Center to benefit the community and our Physical Education curriculum will be constructed where the middle school cafeteria is currently located. As a result, a second serving line was added to the high school cafeteria to accommodate Grades 6-12 meals. The Fitness Center will have a separate entrance for community use outside school hours. Guidelines for community use are to be determined and will be based on proper staffing as well as current COVID-19 protocols.

SUPPLEMENTAL WORK

As a result of the project being under budget, the Board of Education plans to use the remaining funds to complete additional upgrades and maintenance work at both campuses. Including this supplemental work, the project will not exceed the total amount authorized by district voters ($28.9 million).

“The District has an opportunity to augment the capital improvement project with items that were cut from the original scope due to budgetary concerns,” said Superintendent Wetherbee. “The Board decided to use the remaining bond funds to address other health and safety items as well as enhancements to our facilities without any additional tax impact.”

The following supplemental renovations and upgrades will benefit multiple academic and extracurricular programs:

- Refurbishment of auditorium sound system (MS/HS)
- Gymnasium wall mats (MS/HS)
- Gymnasium audio system (MS)
- Athletic field lights (MS/HS)
- Family & Consumer Science classroom (MS/HS)
- Convert outdated and unusable locker rooms, pictured left (CDE)

Additional structural and maintenance work includes:

- Replacement of original 1976 water piping (MS/HS)
- Cafeteria kitchen/serving area floor replacement (HS)

The District initially expected to reach project completion by September 2022; however, this supplemental work will likely continue into the 2022-23 school year.

Unusable elementary school locker rooms and showers will be converted into more useful storage and learning spaces.
SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE

The front of the MS/HS was reconfigured to create a single point of entry for optimized safety and convenience. The MS/HS main offices were relocated to a combined administrative suite centrally located at the new entrance. The Transportation Office was also relocated here.

The facade has a new look that was designed to resemble a college or workplace campus, with sleek lines, lighting and seating on the front sidewalk (right, top).

The parking lots were resurfaced and reconfigured as recommended by the state-mandated Building Condition Survey (BCS) performed in 2015. The new layout provides improved traffic flow and safety by separating the bus loop from staff and visitor parking areas (right, center). The final asphalt coat will be applied next year.

A Student Services Center for shared services such as guidance counselors and social workers was constructed. It can be easily accessed by middle and high school students. The Central Registrar was also moved to this area from its previous spot deeper in the building, making it more convenient and accessible for families who need to register new students in the district (see pg. 3).

FACILITY UPGRADES & MAINTENANCE

A new well and 200 kW generator were installed at the MS/HS, per BCS recommendations. These items were replaced to better support essential building functions and address difficulties in finding replacement parts to repair the outdated equipment.

The soccer field was re-graded based on BCS recommendations. The purpose is to improve drainage and prevent flooding that often led to the cancellation of home soccer games due to excess water on the field. New bleachers were installed.
Additions & Upgrades at CDE

At Cairo-Durham Elementary School, the front parking lot was expanded to address limited parking availability for families visiting the school.

The HVAC system was upgraded to provide air conditioning throughout the school and help maintain a productive learning environment during warmer months. Schoolwide air conditioning aims to alleviate some of the challenges associated with high classroom temperatures, such as physical symptoms related to heat and decreased student interest and alertness.

The Health Office was reconfigured to meet accessibility needs. This includes wider door frames to accommodate mobility equipment such as wheelchairs. Strobe lights for the fire alarm system were installed for accessibility purposes as well.

Two girls’ bathrooms were renovated and new plumbing and fixtures were installed. Two boys’ bathrooms will receive the same renovations next summer during Phase 2B.

Roof repairs were completed as recommended by the 2015 Building Condition Survey. Additionally, many areas above classroom ceilings were safely cleared of asbestos that remained from when the building was constructed. Since asbestos is not dangerous unless it is disturbed, the remaining material does not pose a threat to students and staff. Asbestos abatement will continue in the summer while school is not in session.

Twenty-nine parking spots were added to the front parking lot at Cairo-Durham Elementary School to provide more parking for staff and families. The land for this expansion was acquired from the Town of Cairo after district voters approved the land purchase proposition in May 2017.