

## EXPAND, continued from Page A1

fields, replacing the tennis courts, adding parking and removing the portable units entirely, but Wolfe said redesign specifics would be hammered out by a master planning team at McNary when the process reaches the point of execution.

If recommendations from the Long Range Facility Planning Task Force were to receive unaltered approval from the Salem-Keizer School District Board, McNary would see an additional 18 classrooms constructed. That number includes 14 general instruction rooms, one additional science lab, another classroom for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Math) instruction, and two career technical education (CTE) classrooms.

Some of the documentation the task force worked from included more specific recommendations for career technical programs, including:

- Remodeling or adding facilities to locate business management, graphic design, information technology and media production programs closer together to foster more collaboration.

- Remodeling the culinary arts facility for expansion.

- Increasing space for the automotive program.

- Additional instruction for each of the above areas.

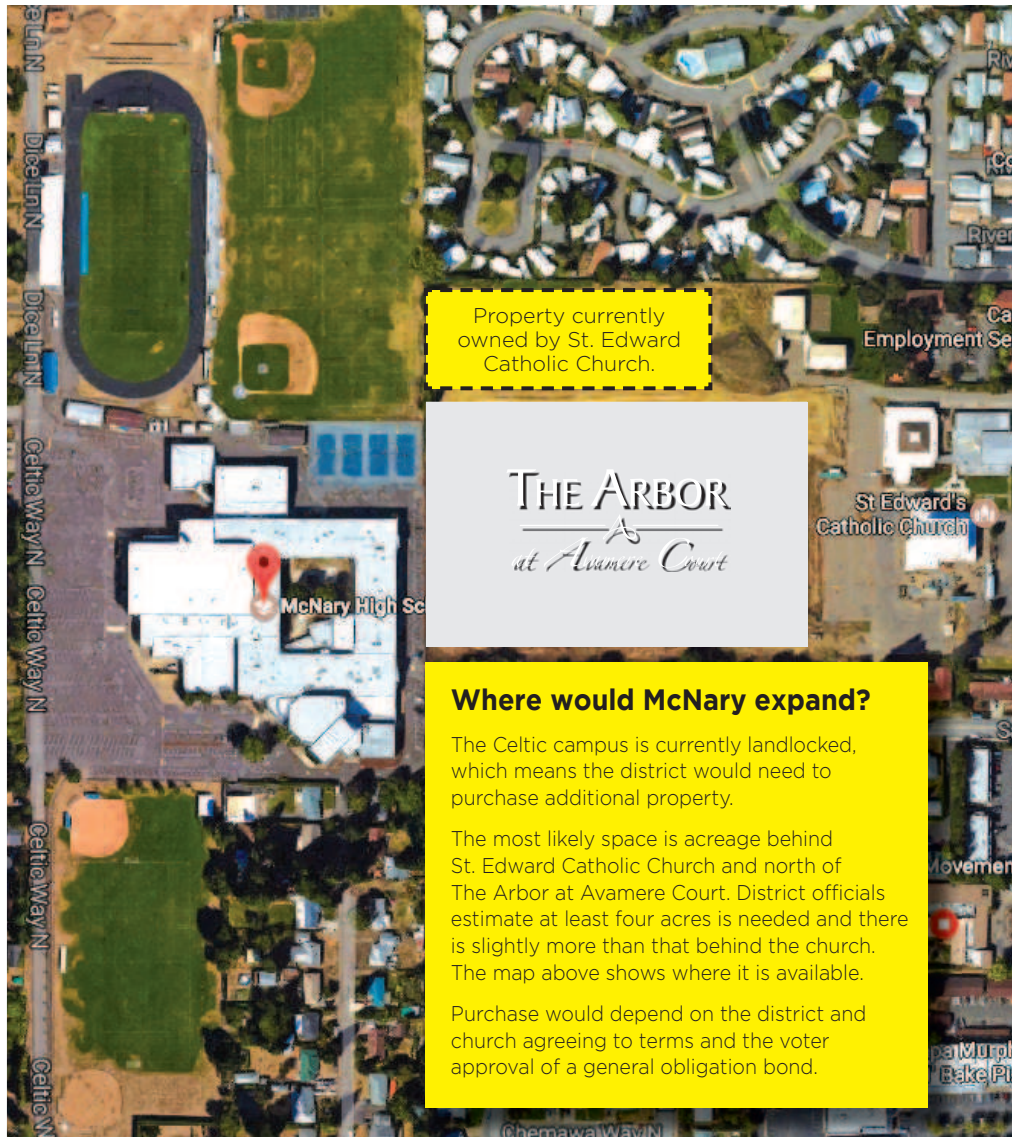
- And creating a new program in sports medicine.

All together the CTE programs could serve about 1,800 students at MHS alone.

The task force recommended pursuing a general obligation bond to make the necessary upgrades. The total cost to cover all the recommendations throughout the district will be about \$550 million. It will be up to the Salem Keizer School Board, which will receive the final report recommendations at its March 14 meeting, to decide whether to pursue any, all or part of that amount.

How quickly the process moves forward will depend on the direction of the board.

“The next step in the pro-



cess, typically, is that staff will conduct a bond feasibility study,” Wolfe said.

Projected enrollment increases are expected to impact Keizer’s McNary High School and Salem’s McKay High School most heavily. Both schools already have enrollments in excess of the buildings capacities, even with portable classrooms stationed at the sites.

McKay is at 135 percent of its capacity without portables, McNary is at 119 percent without portables. Those figures drop precipitously with the use of portable classrooms, but both are still well over capacity.

If nothing changes in the coming decade, McKay will balloon to 161 percent of its capacity. McNary will rise to 130 percent of its capacity at its peak in 2025, according to population analysis provided by Portland State University.

Aside from needing more space in common areas there are also specific classroom needs at various schools, like science labs. The lack of science labs has a direct affect on instruction available. At the middle school level, students frequently take only one semester of science per year because of the lack of facilities. This is at a time when STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) classes are receiving increased emphasis nationwide.

While the task force worked specifically on issues of capacity and infrastructure, there have as yet been no discussions on staffing for all the additional classrooms and spaces. What the district can afford in terms of staffing will also be a consideration when it comes to pursuing a bond or prioritizing the final recommendation for the task force.

In addition to McNary, the final recommendations from the task force affect six other Keizer schools. Here’s the break down for schools other than McNary:

- **Cummings Elementary School** – adding or renovating cafeteria facilities.

- **Gubser Elementary School** – adding or renovating gym and cafeteria facilities, and adding three classrooms.

- **Keizer Elementary School** – adding or renovating gym, cafeteria and library facilities, and adding four classrooms.

- **Kennedy Elementary School** – adding or renovating cafeteria facilities, adding four classrooms.

- **Claggett Creek Middle School** – adding or renovating cafeteria and library facilities, adding two science labs.

- **Whiteaker Middle School** – adding one science lab.

## RENOVATE, continued from Page A1

“I think if we were smart with that space, we could get hundreds of more kids in there,” Jespersen said. “That’s the type of thing I want to look at. We have far more kids that want it (weight training) than we can offer. If we just changed the configuration, which we’re starting to work on, that would make a big difference. It’s going to be over \$100,000 to reconfigure that space but when it’s done, it’s going to be world class and it’s going to provide more kids the opportunity to get in that weight room.”

Another example is the music wing, which currently has a large square hallway that takes space away from a too small orchestra room.

“There’s an enormous hallway that doesn’t make any sense,” Jespersen said. “Bring that wall in, you can add six to eight feet of depth into that orchestra room and you still have access into the music wing. It’s things like that, if we just make some improvements, we can maximize our space.”

McNary also doesn’t have enough science labs and those it does have were built with the original school in 1964, when class sizes were much smaller.

One science teacher has classes in three different rooms while those instructors are on their planning period.

“We have a number of science teachers that are teaching science in classrooms that aren’t really science classrooms,” Jespersen said. “Science classrooms require water, multiple sinks, gas lines. We can’t provide that right now and science is such an integral part of what we do. That has to change. We’re not serving kids in the best way.”

While newer lab stations are built against the wall in a U-shape or horseshoe, McNary’s take up more than half of its science rooms with kids standing butt to butt. The rest of the space is crammed with desks.

“The way the class is designed I can either have seat

time or I can have lab time,” said Frank Hanson, who teaches chemistry at McNary. “If you look at square footage, this is a gigantic room. If you look at workable space, it’s a tiny room. Put them (labs) against the wall and we could essentially double the space. If they redid that, the room would be gigantic and would be able to do anything you wanted. This could be an gargantuan, awesome room and I wouldn’t even have a problem housing more kids in it. It’s just the design flaw, building for 1964 versus 2017.”

Hanson said the labs also aren’t safe. While turning concentrated acid into diluted, Hanson has twice spilled the chemical on himself. He was wearing proper attire—gloves, goggles and an apron—but the acid got onto his pants.

“I have a nice pair of pants that have holes all the way down it,” Hanson said. “If I wouldn’t have run and stuck my leg in the sink, it would have got to me.”

Hanson went to a sink because the science labs don’t have chemical showers.

“One lawsuit from a chemical burn of a student could end it,” Hanson said. “If you had the proper equipment and someone got hurt, that’s cause and effect, in the class sometimes accidents happen but if you don’t have the proper equipment to check the student if something happens, you make yourself liable.”

Jespersen doesn’t want Salem-Keizer to build a new high school in the district but instead supports the idea of getting each school at 2,200 students and reinvesting in the current buildings. For McNary, that could mean remodeling its science labs and weight room while also acquiring adjacent land to build more classrooms.

“I think instead of just going out and building a new high school, we reinvest dollars into our existing schools,” he said. “We build out a wing if we need to. We think creatively with the space we have. We can make it work. It’s going to take money, but not as much as a new high school.”



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