

# The Regional Reporter

G R E A T H I G H S C H O O L S M A D E G R E A T E R

G R E A T E R E G G H A R B O R  
R E G I O N A L H I G H S C H O O L D I S T R I C T



Absegami High School



Oakcrest High School

P R O P O S E D N E W H I G H S C H O O L R E F E R E N D U M

## LETTER FROM THE GREATER EGG HARBOR REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Our area has experienced a boom in growth in the past several years. Our two high schools, built in 1960 and 1982, have reached their maximum capacity and, as a district, we are beginning to experience severe overcrowding. According to the state requirements for housing students, coupled with our enrollment projections, we know that in the next two years we will have 1,000 students more than we can adequately house.

The good news is that the district has been studying these and many other issues for about five years and recently enlisted the help of a task force. The task force is made up of members of the constituent communities; all have worked diligently to review possible solutions to house the increasing number of students and to continue to offer the best in academics, arts, and athletics.

The task force recommended a new high school building, to be constructed in Egg Harbor City, with a capacity for

1,000 students. This solution will be adequate to serve our increasing population for the next several years. The task force also studied alternative academic models, such as a "school within a school," and a magnet school program, both of which will enhance the current curriculum and offer students more choices in their course of study.

The preliminary plans have been submitted to the Department of



*Dr. Adam C. Pfeffer, Superintendent, discusses the proposed site at the task force meeting.*

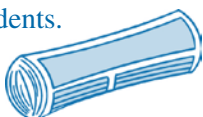


*Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District Board of Education*

Education. The School Construction Corporation (SCC) will fund a significant portion of the project. In order for the district to receive this funding assistance, we must pass the referendum scheduled for September 25, 2007. We are embarking on a plan of information-sharing opportunities and we want to hear from you. We are offering several avenues for you to ask questions, voice your concerns, and share your opinions. The next page will offer more in-depth information about the process and the proposed new high school. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

**Read:** Local newspapers for updates and newsletters mailed to residents.



**Attend:** Board of education and special referendum meetings in the coming months. Board meetings are held on the first and second Monday of each month.



**Click:** Visit the district website for information and updates at [www.gehrhsd.net](http://www.gehrhsd.net)

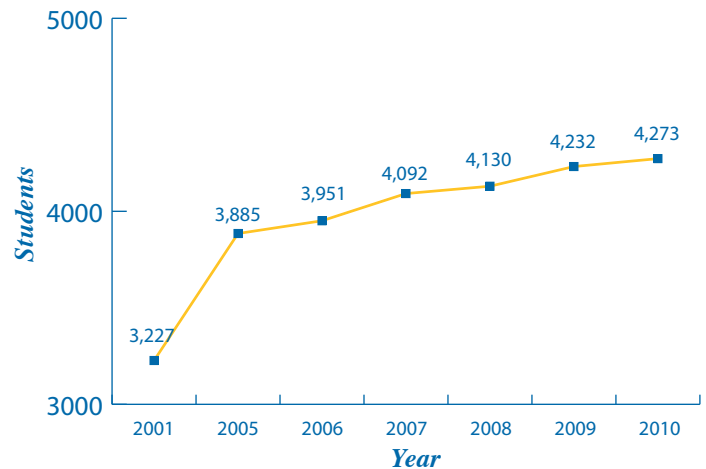


# THE RATIONALE FOR A NEW HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

As far back as the 2000-2001 school year, the administration and school board members have been looking at possible solutions to educate the rapidly expanding high school population. Research was conducted, information was gathered, and a task force was established to help the board work on real solutions that would carry the district for the next several years.

## ENROLLMENT ISSUES

In the past seven years, the enrollment for the Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School District has increased by 989 students. Based on figures determined by the Center for Regional and Business Research at Atlantic Cape Community College and certified by the New Jersey Department of Education, we anticipate the district will exceed capacity by more than 1,000 students by the 2008-2009 school year. The functional capacity of our two high schools, Absegami and Oakcrest, is 2,951 students as determined by the Department of Education; enrollment projections anticipate an enrollment of more than 4,200 students within the next few years.



## SUMMARY OF THE TASK FORCE FINDINGS

The district scouted an appropriate location for a new high school building, located on approximately 66 acres in Egg Harbor City. The land was secured, the permits were filed, and early in 2006, the Pinelands Commission gave the district preliminary approval after completing the environmental impact studies.

The proposed project is for a new high school building, approximately 186,000 square feet. The construction costs are being refined. The district has been notified by the SCC that a significant amount of the cost of construction will be absorbed by them, thus reducing the tax impact on the residents. Actual tax impacts have not yet been calculated. The tax figures will be released later in 2007, well before the referendum date.

Due to the rapid increase in student population, there is really no viable alternative to building a new facility. As a district, we are required by state and federal laws to keep class sizes manageable and offer specific core curricula. To do this, we need more space in which to offer our children a solid education that will prepare them for their futures.



## ALTERNATIVE ACADEMIC MODELS

The task force reviewed three design concepts recommended by the administration to enrich the academic life of the district's students. A "school-within-a-school" model is proposed in which the grades will be divided into ninth and tenth for one school, and eleventh and twelfth for the other school, all housed in one building. The benefits of this model are to give the students continuity and support by offering a smaller learning community within a larger student population.

The second concept is that of a magnet school, in which the curriculum

focuses on an area of academic interest. Proposed disciplines for a magnet school are:

- animation and graphic arts
- creative and performing arts
- environmental sciences
- international baccalaureate
- technology

Any student in the district can elect to study at the magnet school. The magnet school concept is quite successful all across the country and has proven to be very popular in districts with large student populations.