GCSSD Special Work Session
September 3, 2026 6:00 PM
Gibson County High School Library

Mission Statement: "The Gibson County Special School District provides learning experiences through which every student will be well prepared for their life, education, and career."

1. **Facility Priorities**

GCHS Feasibility Study Meeting - #2

8-10-26

1) Discussed Basics of the Proposed Options – stated that the Status Quo Option was what was selected already. Briefly shared some slides/hard copies of the basic conditions, needs, costs, comparisons, and utilization rates of the district schools. Offered to show more details of the original options posed by Lewis Group Architects. No one requested more info.

2) Focused on GCHS specific components of the study including floor plans, pictures, history, damage, needs, repairs, and costs Including the proposed new safety vestibule).

3) Discussed and asked each member present to share potential needs, concerns, requests, ideas, and questions. Here is the list of things that were mentioned:
   A) **Restrooms** – Update them; especially the two big bathrooms in the main gym and the one in the theater lobby. Those are the ones the public sees the most.
   B) **Signage** – Inside and Outside; Improve, replace, add, or update throughout the campus.
   C) **Metal Detectors** – Portable as needed for events (or potentially school)
   D) **Parking** - typically need more for big events; question is where to put?
   E) **Wrapping** of walls and some entrances with GC/ Pioneer designs – helps safety also by limiting vision through glass from the outside
   F) **Wi-Fi Boosters** – need better access for inside classrooms/offices
   G) **Window Blinds –** replace old and damaged in classroom windows.
   H) **Safety Film -** for outside windows of classrooms
   I) **Concessions** – enlarge main gym concessions by extending it outward several feet.
   J) **PE Locker rooms** – update the ones in the main gym.
   K) **Sound suppressing** wall boards or ceiling baffles in the Aux. Gym - extremely difficult to hear in the Aux. gym for classes, practices, games, and events.

4) 7 Total people attended:
   Kim Nolan – GCHS Parent
   Dr. Jill Howell – GCHS Parent
   Courtney Hudson – GCHS Teacher (with small children living in district)
   Dustin Taylor – GCHS Teacher/ Soccer Coach
   Tina Eddlemon – GCHS Teacher (Alumnus of GCHS with one remaining child at GCHS)
   Sarah Stephenson – GCHS Junior
   Todd Sheppard – GCHS Principal

Kenton School

List of needs:

1) Window Film for the Vestibule
2) 2nd Buzzer System for the Vestibule
3) Gutters on the school damaged by ice (work with Insurance company)
4) Mulch in the Playground that is compatible with Requirments
5) Bathroom in the Gym
6) Nurse on site
7) Guidance Counselor

Rutherford School

This list was created based on the Community Feasibility Study meetings.

- Lower-Level Drain Line collapsed, making the restrooms out of order. These bathrooms are needed for students during our CTE, Art, and Music classes. When Middle Schoolers are in CTE, they must come up the stairs and use the Elementary restrooms.
- Restrooms in Kindergarten class and the classroom next to it. A pipe has burst inside the wall and needs to be repaired, so these restrooms are in working order. Without these restrooms, if a Kindergarten student needs to use the restroom, they must go by themselves down the hallway.
- Total window replacement for all rooms. Currently there are windows that are at ground level that an intruder can pry open and gain access to our classrooms.
- Add HVAC system to our hallways.
- Elementary restrooms need to have a hot water heater added so that our students can wash their hands with warm water.
- The back gate on the back playground needs to be secure/locked. When we have students on our front playground (Elementary Students), anyone can walk through the gate and come onto our playground before any staff member notices them. This is for extra security.
- The door by the 3rd/4th grade classrooms needs to be replaced. There are many days when this door does not latch properly or the teacher's badges don't open the door.
- Add additional speakers to the hallways so the intercom system can be heard by staff/students.
- Build back the shaded teacher sitting area on the front playground.
- Upgrade the sound system in the gym.
- Upgrade restrooms.
- Replace ceiling tiles in all rooms.
- Replace the tread on all the stairs.
- Paint lines on back and front parking lots.
- Need a vestibule when entering the front office.

South Gibson Elementary School Facilities Update

Good evening, members of the Board.

First, I want to thank you for your continued support of South Gibson Elementary School. We are fortunate to have a beautiful facility that continues to serve our students, staff, and community well. Although our building is relatively new, there are several maintenance and improvement needs that have developed through normal use and heavy daily traffic.

The first area of need is our parking lot. The parking space lines have faded significantly and need to be restriped. In addition, directional arrows should be painted to improve traffic flow during morning drop-off and afternoon dismissal. These improvements would increase safety and efficiency for our families and staff.

The exterior of our building and the sidewalks would also benefit from pressure washing. This routine maintenance would improve the appearance of our campus and help preserve the condition of the building.

Inside the school, we have several needs related to safety and maintenance. We would like to install half-dome mirrors at hallway intersections. These mirrors would improve visibility and allow staff to better supervise students throughout the day.

Our playground is another area that requires attention. We understand that the district does not provide funding for playground equipment; however, the playground surface and surrounding grass areas are part of our school's facilities and require ongoing maintenance. Because of the large number of students using the playground every day, the grass in high-traffic areas has repeatedly died despite multiple attempts at reseeding. These areas have become dirt and mud, especially during wet weather. Students then track the mud into the building, creating additional cleaning challenges and potential slipping hazards. Installing mulch or artificial turf in these heavily used areas would provide a long-term solution, improve the appearance of the playground, and help preserve the cleanliness and safety of our school.

There are also several interior maintenance items that need to be addressed. Portions of the walls throughout the school require repainting due to normal wear, peeling paint, and minor damage. In classrooms, wall repairs are needed where whiteboards and bulletin boards were relocated during the installation of Promethean panels. Finally, ceiling tiles that were stained during previous roof leaks should be replaced now that the roof repairs have been completed.

While none of these items individually are major renovations, together they represent important maintenance needs that will help us preserve our facility,

improve safety, and maintain a clean, welcoming learning environment for our students, staff, and visitors.

Thank you for your continued investment in South Gibson Elementary School and for considering these requests. We appreciate your ongoing support as we work to provide the best possible environment for our students.

Speech to the Gibson County School Board

Community Facilities Meeting

Good evening. Thank you for the time tonight.

My name is Chandler Whitaker. This is my eighth year in education. I've spent seven of those years teaching at South Gibson County, and one year teaching at Yorkville and Spring Hill. I'm also a graduate of South Gibson County High School myself — class of 2015. So this isn't just a district I work in. It's the district that raised me, and it's a district I've now taught in on both ends of the county.

I want to talk about something that I think gets lost sometimes in conversations about this district — and that's the fact that the north end and the south end of Gibson County are not competing against each other. We are one district, one school system, one team. But we are fighting two very different battles, and I don't think either end fully sees the other's fight.

On the south end, we're struggling to keep kids. Every year, we are competing directly against Crockett County, Milan, USJ, TCA, and every other surrounding school for the same students and the same families. And when parents are choosing where to send their kids, they are looking at facilities, programs, and opportunities. That's where we're losing ground.

And that competition is about to get more serious. Jackson-Madison County has recently approved multiple new charter schools, and Union University has announced plans to open one as well. Historically, a meaningful number of our students have come from families who moved here from the Jackson area. We don't know yet how these new schools will perform, but we can't afford to simply wait and find out. If we want to sustain what we already have, and help

the rest of this district hold on to what it has, we have a window of time, right now, to invest in our programs, our facilities, and our opportunities.

I know this board recently commissioned a full facilities assessment, and I want to acknowledge something about that process. When you were presented with five different options to consolidate and modernize the north end's aging campuses, you chose to keep every one of those schools open. The consultants ranked that choice last, out of six, in terms of efficiency. But I don't think you made that choice because it was efficient — you made it because it preserves something real. Every community in this county gets to keep its school. That was a vote for stability and local identity over pure numbers on a spreadsheet.

I'm not here to argue with that choice. I'm here to ask this board to apply that same value to us. If every community gets to keep what it has, our community deserves the chance to finally get what we don't have.

Here's what I want this board to understand: our high school has the potential to be one of the best schools in the state of Tennessee. The district's own facilities report confirms it — South Gibson County High School is running at roughly 83 percent utilization, the closest of any facility in this entire district to the ideal range. We are not an underused building. We are the school doing the most with what we have. And still, we are being asked to compete against schools with better stadiums, better auditoriums, and better access to programming, without the tools to match them.

Let me be specific about what that means.

I want to thank our school board for the outstanding sports complex we have for soccer, softball, baseball, and tennis. Those facilities are something our

students and community can be proud of, and they reflect a commitment to providing quality opportunities for our athletes.

At the same time, our football stadium does not compare favorably with the facilities of the schools on our schedule. While this is certainly about supporting our football program, it is also about the image and pride of our county. The condition of our facilities sends a message about how we value our students and how we present ourselves to those who visit our schools. When our kids take the field, they know it, and when other communities come to play us, they see it too.

We don't have an auditorium on the south end. Not for community meetings, not for public events — and most importantly, not for our theatre program, which is thriving right now with nothing but a cafeteria to perform in. And I want to point out something directly from your own assessment: Gibson County High School already has an auditorium. It was built in 2010. Our students deserve the same.

Since 2009, we have been bussing our kids to Gibson County High School for CTE courses. That's not a new arrangement — that's sixteen years of our students traveling across the county for opportunities we don't offer on our own campus. But here is the challenge we face: our athletes have an athletic period built into fourth block. So if one of our student-athletes wants to take a CTE course that's only offered at Gibson County High School, they can't just go take one class. They have to carve out two full blocks of their day just to access something every other student in this district can walk to. We are asking kids to choose between athletics and career and technical education, when they shouldn't have to choose at all.

None of this is a request to take something away from the north end. This is a request to invest in the south end so that both ends of this county can compete — for students, for families, and for the future of this district — instead of losing ground to every school around us.

We have the potential to be great. The data in your own study proves it. We just need this board to help us build what greatness requires.

Before I close, I want to make sure each of you has a copy of something in front of you tonight.

This is a written list of our facility and program needs at South Gibson County High School, organized into three categories. The first is what I'd call our signature investments — the football stadium, an auditorium, and expanding our CTE offerings so our kids aren't bussed across the county for classes we could be offering right here. The second is infrastructure and repair — roof leaks, erosion around our buildings, cracked floor tiles, aging doors and window seals, and parking lots and driveways that need replacing. And the third is campus and student life improvements — closing in our open courtyard for better use of space, a shaded pavilion at our band practice field, new cafeteria tables, and better acoustics in our cafeteria.

I don't expect all of it to happen at once but it does need to be a part of this conversation about the future of our district going forward.

Thank you.

South Gibson County High School

Facility & Program Needs — Submitted for Board Review

South Gibson County Community Facilities Meeting

This list reflects the current facility and program needs at South Gibson County High School, organized by category.

Signature Investments

These items have the greatest impact on student opportunity, community use, and our ability to compete with neighboring districts.

- Football stadium — two options for board consideration:
  - Option A: Purchase adjacent land and construct a new multi-sport stadium for the high school; repurpose the current stadium for middle school use.
  - Option B: Renovate the existing stadium — press box/home stands, concessions, restrooms, entrance/ticket booth, bleachers, turf (to withstand combined MS/HS/band field usage), additional field and area lighting, scoreboard/video board, fieldhouse upgrades (weight room, coaches' area, locker room), an indoor practice facility, and pavement repair around the facility.
- Auditorium — for community meetings, public events, and our theatre program, which currently has no dedicated performance space.
- Expand CTE course offerings at SGCHS so students are not required to be transported to Gibson County High School to access career and technical education.

Infrastructure & Building Repairs

These are maintenance and safety items affecting the current campus.

- Roof leaks
- Erosion around buildings, sidewalks, and storm drains
- Driveways and parking lots need replacing
- Front lobby window seals and framework — aged and deteriorating
- Interior and exterior doors need new hardware
- Cracked floor tiles throughout the building

Campus & Student Life Enhancements

These items improve daily student experience and make better use of existing spaces.

- Close in the open courtyard area at the center of the school — potential use as lab/storage space or an amphitheater

- Large pavilion with a concrete base at the band practice field to provide shade
- Paved path from the band room to the practice field (routed behind the visitor side of the football stadium)
- New cafeteria tables
- Additional sound panels in the cafeteria

South Gibson County Middle School

Facility & Program Needs — Submitted for Board Review

This list reflects the current facility and program needs at South Gibson County Middle School, organized by category.

Signature Investments

These items have the greatest impact on student opportunity, community use, and our ability to compete with neighboring districts.

- Main Gym Bleachers — The current bleachers in our gym are original to the building. They have several broken seats and have difficulty staying on track. The bleachers are also not deep enough for older students or adults.
- Front Office Desk— the secretaries' desk in the front office is original to the building and shows tremendous signs of wear.
- Library Furniture – These items are original to the school building and showing signs of wear and have a poor aesthetic.

Infrastructure & Building Repairs

These are maintenance and safety items affecting the current campus.

- Erosion around buildings, sidewalks, and storm drains
- Potholes on sides of driveways
- Cracked floor tiles throughout the building

Campus & Student Life Enhancements

These items improve daily student experience and make better use of existing spaces

- Sound panels in the cafeteria

My name is Maddie Haverson and I am here tonight to share some of the concerns that have been expressed by the South Gibson County communities.

When I attended the community meeting last month to discuss the results of the feasibility study, a main point of contention that came up repeatedly was the imbalance in the representation of this school board.

South Gibson elementary, middle, and high schools educate approximately 64% of the students in this county. However, our representatives make up only 29% of this Board. This significant discrepancy has been highlighted recently by the results of the feasibility study and the decisions that have been made so far regarding those results.

Many of our community members have expressed concerns about the long-term effects of continuing to pour money into school sites that no longer make financial sense. Three of our school sites, for example – Kenton, Spring Hill, and Yorkville – each serve less than 5% of the total student population in this district. The list of needed repairs and upgrades for these sites is extensive and costly. At what point do we accept that a change is needed? At what point do we let go of the sunk cost fallacy and admit that these schools are no longer serving the needs of our students in the best way?

I know that you have already voted to maintain the status quo with our school sites for now. That vote has played a significant role in amplifying the concerns of South Gibson parents regarding their representation on this Board. We are concerned that you will not make decisions based on relevant data. We are concerned that you are not willing to make the best decision for the district as a

whole. And we are concerned that you will avoid making a substantial decision about the future of our school sites until the district's financial stability has already been undermined. I'd like to remind you that you don't just represent the voters who elect you into these positions. You represent the entire school district, and every student in it. You owe them all the best opportunities for education that you can give them. And you owe our future students the same.

This feasibility study and the questions that it has brought up have highlighted the divide between the schools in the north end and the south end. Looking at a map of our district, it is not surprising – there is quite literally a massive geographical division between the northern and southern portions of our district. My hope, moving forward, is that we can close that divide and find a way to best serve all of our students.

Dyer	352	9.50%
Gibson	379	10.23%
Kenton	107	2.89%
Rutherford	248	6.69%
SGCES	849	22.91%
SGCMS	758	20.46%
SGCHS	762	20.57%
Spring Hill	94	2.54%
Yorkville	156	4.21%
TOTAL	3705	100%

Spring Hill School

A MESSAGE FROM OUR COMMITTEE

At Spring Hill School, success is measured by more than test scores. It is measured by the child whose teacher notices when something isn't quite right, the family who feels welcomed every time they walk through the doors, and the students who are known by name – not by a number. SHS is more than a building it is the heart of the community.

WHY SHS CONTINUES TO THRIVE

- Small class sizes and a low student-to-teacher ratio
- Caring, accessible teachers and administrators who put students first
- Every student is known, valued, and supported
- Strong academic programs with a consistent record of success
- Meaningful connections between students, staff, and families
- Deep partnerships with parents and the community
- A welcoming school culture where every child belongs

EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE

3-5

Proven Academic Strength
SHS has remained at a level 3 or higher since 2018, with consistent academic growth.

0

Zero deficiencies
found on the most recent fire & safety inspections

100

Perfect score
on Health Inspection

Investing in Spring Hill's Future

Spring Hill School is producing excellent results because of our students, families, and staff - not because of a perfect building. The following projects represent the most important investments needed to preserve a safe, welcoming, and effective learning environment for current and future generations.

TOP PRIORITIES

1. Keep SHS students at SHS
2. Secure Entrance Vestibule
3. Grounds & Drainage Improvements
4. Athletic Facility Improvements
5. Replace Interior doors & Hardware
6. Basement Water Pump

"Our greatest strength isn't our building – it's the children, families, and staff who fill it."

Additional Improvements

- Host GCMS sporting events at all schools
- Ballards for HVAC units & FEMA room doors
- Cafeteria ceiling above drop grid
- Erosion and sidewalk repairs
- ADA-compliant bathroom
- Minor repairs: playground gate, damaged/stained brick, splash block, & bathroom stall hardware

The committee for Yorkville School analyzed the feasibility report regarding the needs for our building. Together, we have found the following as the most urgent needs for our building:

1. Safety Vestibule added to the main entrance for further protection when admitting visitors.
2. Inside doors to lock from the inside for safety. Our current doors must be locked from the outside.
3. Ramp which is ADA aligned for the lower end of the elementary building. There is currently not a ramp to access the cafeteria and three classrooms. There is a ground level entrance which requires anyone needing entrance to go through the FEMA buildings and outside to enter through the cafeteria back doors.
4. Safety coverings for all windows for extra protection.
5. Add a fence to enclose the entire front playground to prevent anyone from walking onto the playground during and after school hours.
6. Add heating/cooling vents to the hallways
7. Repair the sagging gym floor

Yorkville School Future Action Items/Wish List:

1. Adding an accessibility ramp to the cafeteria.
2. Adding a Washer/Dryer combo for washing gym mat coverings.
3. Adding Hot water capabilities to all student bathrooms w/anti-scalding valves.
4. Gutter cleanout to allow water to escape the roof.
5. Playground equipment upgrades.
6. Water and sewer lines in slab are bad. No access.
7. Old Septic system needs updating.
8. Gym restrooms inoperable.
9. Plumbing in Pre-K classroom drain inoperable.
10. Erosion around buildings.
11. Bollards around HVAC.
12. Bring sports games back to local schools.

Yorkville School Future Action Items/Wish List:

1. Adding an accessibility ramp to the cafeteria.
    a. Any person with a mobility issue currently has to gain access to the K-1 and Special Education rooms and the Cafeteria by going through a FEMA room or going to the back of the school. Either way, the only flat/level entrance is through the cafeteria back doors.
2. Adding a Washer/Dryer combo for washing gym mat coverings.
    a. Our PreK staff has to use their own washer/dryer throughout the week to launder PreK mats.
3. Adding Hot water capabilities to all student bathrooms w/anti-scalding valves.
    a. This is to help with germ spreading and with very cold water in the winter months.
4. Gutter cleanout to allow water to escape the roof.
5. Playground equipment upgrades.
    a. Our playground has not been updated in at least 25 years. The equipment is old, full of paint layers and not enticing. Our school is small and raising the funds for an adequate playground is very hard to do.
6. Water and sewer lines in slab are bad. No access to be able to cut off different areas of the building.
7. Old Septic system needs updating.
8. Gym restrooms are inoperable. We don't use these
9. Plumbing in Pre-K classroom drain inoperable.
10. Erosion around buildings.
11. Bollards around HVAC.
12. Bring sports games back to local schools. I have explained this is not feasible due to the crowds who now attend these games and it doesn't allow our students to have a true "home" floor if the games are rotated.