

Education Report

by Ed Linz

I will be providing our annual look at each of the three schools in our FCPS pyramid in a later issue. The big news at this time concerns the proposed renovation of West Springfield High School (WSHS). This project is in the middle of the planning stage, a lengthy process that was approved and funded in an earlier school bond issue. I spoke with the head of the planning team and was assured that the project remains on track, but that the funding for the actual construction process has not yet been achieved. He further assured me that it will be on a future bond ballot, and that he considered this to be a mere formality. Assuming that the bond issue passes (history suggests that they always do so in Fairfax County), the renovation itself will begin sometime in 2016. When I asked how long the renovation will take, he replied, "Usually four summers." If this is correct, the renovation will be completed sometime in 2020.

During the renovation, there will be extensive use of trailers, as each section of the building is being renovated. There will be an entirely new science wing, which will be located in the lower end of the existing student parking lot. It is not clear where future parking will be located, or if there will even be new parking. There had been some talk of simply building an entirely new high school on the existing grounds (on the field behind the baseball field), but this option apparently was never seriously considered by the FCPS admin team, even though there were several supporters of this less intrusive option. The costs, apparently, were similar.

Bottom line: If your children are currently in 6th grade or below, they will probably be the first to enjoy a new building for their high school studies. Everyone else will be at WSHS during the renovation process, or will have already graduated.