



Voices of the Valley

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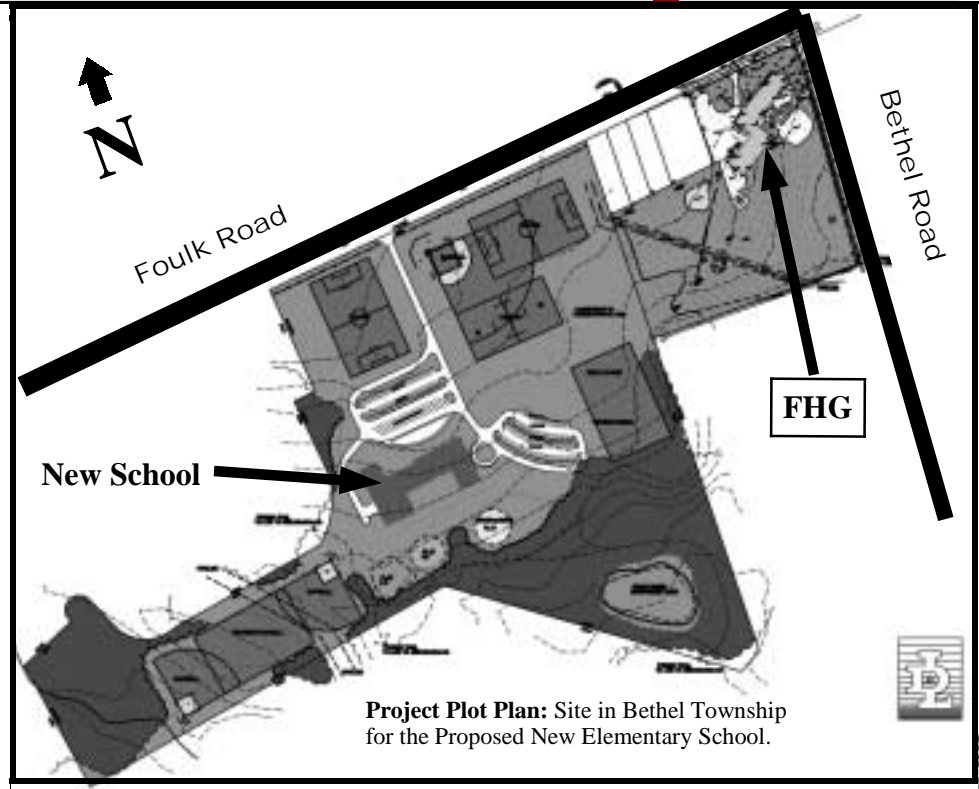
New Elementary School in Bethel Township

Since 1993, The Garnet Valley School District has seen significant growth, at all grade levels. The district has more than doubled its student population in the last ten years. According to recorded enrollment, Garnet Valley School District is the fastest growing district in the state. In order to accommodate that growth, the district has carefully developed a building plan by which classrooms are constructed as closely as possible to the projected need. The district has chosen to increase the building cores to handle ten year growth while only adding the classrooms required to meet present need and projections.

The new elementary school is planned with core facilities to accommodate 1,000 students, while classrooms will be constructed to house 750 students. The design allows for a future phase that will be built to provide space for an additional 250 students when and if the need arises. The school features the same construction design as GVES. The classroom plan calls for: 3 kindergarten rooms with bathroom facilities, 26 grade 1-5 classrooms, 9 special education classrooms, 1 large group instruction room, 2 computer rooms, 1 art room, 1 music room, 1 multi-purpose stage/gym, a cafeteria, and an office area. Age appropriate play areas will be on the south side of the building.

The school site is situated along Foulk Road adjacent to the Francis Harvey Green property. Approximately 50% of the site is wooded allowing for development of nature instruction and trail development. Approximately five acres will be cleared for this project. There is a small stream at the southwest corner of the property with approximately 1.4 acres of wetlands.

The site has a gentle slope running from Foulk Road down to a flattened area where the



school will be constructed. The site is bordered by residential properties on three sides. The Francis Harvey Green property, being adjacent, is seen as a benefit to the overall development of athletic and recreational activities.

The entrance for the school will be from Foulk Road, with access to visitor parking and school bus drop off areas directly in front of the school. There will a separate driveway loop for a kindergarten drop off area adjoining the kindergarten side of the building.

The New elementary school is planned to be opened for classes in September of the year 2002. *(Please turn to pages 2-3 to see Issues and Answers.)*

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The New School Issues and Answers

On October 16, 2000 an Act 34 meeting was held in the Garnet Valley Education Center to review the proposed new elementary school to be built in Bethel Township. (Act 34 is a law that requires a school district to hold a public hearing before building new facilities to set maximum project costs.) A number of community members attended and important questions were raised. The most frequently asked questions and issues discussed are summarized below.

General Questions

Why are we building a new school?

Based upon housing starts in Bethel and Concord Townships new growth of approximately 1,000 new students is projected over the next five years. The heavy growth is expected to affect the elementary grades in particular as depicted in the table on page 3.

What has the district built/renovated over the last five years?

- ◆ GVES was designed in 1995 to open in 1997 to house the 750 student population increase that was projected. It was designed with a expanded core facility, (library, cafeteria, gym, etc.), that would support the addition that was completed in 1999 to accommodate increased student population.
- ◆ The original construction of the GVMS was completed and opened in 1991. The GVMS addition was added to increase capacity to 1,050 students and opened in September 2000. Design is in place, if growth continues, for additional classrooms in the Middle School.
- ◆ The High School is under a three year phased addition, which will increase classroom capacity to 1,250 students and the core facility, (cafeteria, gym, auditorium, library), to accommodate 1,700 students. Should growth continue, the design allows for additional classrooms to be added on a second floor wing.

Why is the district constructing in phases?

It has been the district's philosophy not to incur debt prematurely. The question is always asked, "Will the enrollment projections hold up, based on the economy?" This, of course, is outside our control. We have purposely designed the elementary schools to expand as need arises. Renovations in the Middle School and High School have enlarged core facilities to support classroom additions as they are needed.

Where will the new elementary school be built?

Land has been purchased in Bethel Township on Foulk Road adjacent to the Francis Harvey Green School. Other sites were considered throughout Bethel and Chester Heights. This site was the most desirable and cost effective.

Why couldn't the district expand the existing buildings or use modular units to hold the increased enrollment?

Concord school is already overcrowded. GVES will be filled to capacity in the 2001—2002 school year. The core facilities of the two schools cannot be expanded. The state no longer permits modular units as a permanent solution to growth.

Why wasn't Francis Harvey Green School renovated?

There are a number of concerns about Francis Harvey Green including substantial renovation costs, limited size, limited fields,

limited parking and undersized core facility (gym, cafeteria, library, etc.) It would be difficult to retrofit this building to conform to current PDE (Pennsylvania Department of Education) standards.

What are the plans for the Francis Harvey Green School?

The district will continue to lease the facility to the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU) at \$96,000 per year. Any repairs are shared on a 2 to 1 prorated share with the DCIU.

When is the new school scheduled to be opened and what will be the grade structure?

The new school will open in September, 2002. It will house grades K-5. Concord School will remain a K-2 building and GVES will remain a 3-5 building.

Have the boundary lines for the new school been drawn?

Boundaries will be recommended by a community study group comprised of parents, administrators, board members and community leaders. The Policy Committee of the Board is investigating "model" redistricting policies.

When will staff be assigned?

During the summer and early fall of 2001, school district administrators will meet with the teachers' association (GVEA) and faculty to staff the new facility. It will be our objective to have a blend of veteran and new teachers in all schools.

How will transportation be handled to the new school?

It is the plan for the district to go to a three tier system in 2002. High School and Middle School students will be bused separately to their buildings. Currently the runs are combined. Each of the three elementary schools will have a common start time and will have their own bus runs going directly to each school. By changing from the current two tier system to a three tier system, the number of buses needed should not increase. At this time, it is expected that non-public busing will remain unchanged.

Why are we building additional athletic fields?

We currently lack sufficient space for the Middle School and High School sports programs. In addition, the athletic needs of various community groups, far exceeds capacity. (*See the construction update article on page 5.*)

What types of community activities actually occur in the district?

In 1999, Garnet Valley hosted more than 5,000 non-school related events. Building and field usage are included in this number, with groups representing the: YMCA, Boy and Girl Scouts, evening adult classes, community youth and adult athletic events, quilters, homeowners associations, Special Olympics, theater, community chorus, business meetings, etc.

What is the design for the new school?

The school will feature the same design as GVES with changes based on how the school is situated on the property and from suggestions made by the GVES population. Room size is virtually unchanged with only some changes in public room placement, i.e. the gym/cafeteria complex.

Finance

What will be the impact on my tax bill?

The overall cost of the new school debt service will be phased in over several years. The total debt service impact for the building will be 1.05 mils. This translates to \$105.00 per \$100,000 assessed value phased in over several years. The district costs to open the new elementary school include custodial, utility, maintenance, and insurance costs. The district estimates these costs to total \$423,835.

Why doesn't the projected growth pay for the new building projects and ground?

Let's assume that the tax base will grow by about 5%. That growth would generate new tax revenues of \$1,379,120 next year. Annual debt service for the new project will eventually cost about

\$1,485,000 each year. Also, there are normal budget increases for contractual commitments, expanding services, and pricing increases that must be funded. The district will phase in the new debt service over several years, so that future tax base growth will be available to offset increasingly larger percentages of the total new debt service. The future tax base growth is being considered as part of the district's overall financing strategy.

How is the new school being financed?

The district has entered into an appropriation based financing arrangement with the State Public School Building Authority (SPSBA). An appropriation-based lease obligation is not considered debt in terms of debt ceiling limitations, and does not pledge the taxing power of the district towards repayment. Instead the district will appropriate funds towards debt service each fiscal year as part of the budgetary process. The SPSBA will hold title to the property and lease it back to the Garnet Valley School District. By using the SPSBA, the district is able to combine its borrowing needs with other school districts and take advantage of economies of scale in terms of interest rates, issue costs, and bond rating. The debt issue will be subject to state subsidy intercept provisions, making the offering attractive to bond buyers. By reducing risk to bond-holders, the district will receive a lower interest rate.

Strategic Planning

Quality Educational Opportunities for All.

Garnet Valley Mission Statement 2001—2007 (Draft)

Strategic planning is a continuous process of evaluating the nature of our organizations, identifying quantifiable goals, defining long term objectives, and developing strategies necessary to reach those goals and objectives. The Garnet Valley School District has begun that process to develop a guide for the years 2001—2007.

In October, surveys were distributed to district taxpayers, staff, Garnet Valley High School Seniors, and Student Council members. Over 800 individuals provided feedback to the district. On November 18, a representative group of stakeholders will gather to review the data in light of the district's mission and vision statements and work together to define future strategic directions and aims. In January, action planning teams will be formed to develop specific goals and objectives, which the district will pursue through the year 2007. Ongoing updates will be provided to the community throughout this process.

Safe Schools Grant Awarded

Prevention is the focus of the Garnet Valley's Safe Schools efforts, according to Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Marjorie DelBello.

The district was pleased to be notified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) recently that they were the recipients of a \$64,000 grant. The grant will allow the district to continue efforts begun under a similar grant awarded last year. Garnet Valley will purchase kits and materials and provide training to all staff in the principles of pro-social skills. The curriculum taught in

grades K-9, and reinforced in grades 10-12, teaches students the skills of problem solving, anger management, conflict resolution, empathy, and impulse control.

"While quite a few districts were funded to purchase metal detectors and other hardware with their grant monies, we chose to move in the direction of prevention. We believe that over the long run, the inclusion of these skills will secure a safe and caring environment, and benefits to students and staff will be life long," said Dr. DelBello.

Peer Counseling Training at GVHS

Thirty eight Garnet Valley high school students have been trained as peer counselors. The peer counselors meet regularly to hone their conflict resolution and listening skills. At left, three students board the bus to head for a weekend session where Mrs. Karen Hoffman, Mrs. Nancy Beard and Mrs. Peggy Amoss worked with staff from the Community Dispute Settlement Project to train the peer counselors in peer mediation skills. Training for the peer counselors was paid for by the PDE Safe Schools Grant.

**Photo
Not Available
Online**

Attention Preschool Parents: Special Education Early Intervention Services

If you are a parent of a preschooler residing in the Garnet Valley School District and are concerned that your child is not developing as he/she should in any of the following areas: talking, seeing, playing, thinking, hearing, or moving, help is available. **Free screening services** are provided through the Delaware County Intermediate Unit Early Intervention Program. Call 610-565-0618 for more information or to begin the screening process. **All information is confidential.**



GVSD Construction Update

Garnet Valley High School is in the midst of a three year planned renovation that will boost classroom space to house 1,250 students, with core facilities planned to accommodate 1,500-1,700. The most dramatic major changes are apparent on the Smithbridge Road exterior side of the building. This construction adds new classrooms that will accommodate the fine arts and general classrooms. These classrooms should be ready for students during the spring semester.



The foundation is in for the gym at the High School

The next building phase will start once the students are relocated in the new classroom wing. The vacated interior space will be renovated into a library complex. Later phases are scheduled to include a new entrance with direct access to the administrative and guidance offices, a cafeteria, and an auditorium.

Currently the high school has only one gym for all the physical education classes and sports teams. Until the new gym is completed, high school varsity basketball practice and competition are being played in the GVMS gyms.

Renovations at the MS and the HS, combined with increased enrollment and the need for additional parking lots, have created a need for additional athletic fields. A new layer of sports programs are being considered for freshman competition to allow more student participation for 9th grade students. Implementation of freshman sports largely depends upon field and gym space. When the new school comes online, the planned athletic fields will help alleviate some of the field shortages. Currently the district lacks at least three baseball fields for this coming season for the current program.

Concord Elementary School is at a standstill with no construction or planned expansion. Modular classrooms currently house the increasing K-2 population.

Garnet Valley Elementary School and Garnet Valley Middle School are enjoying a long awaited break from the construction and shifting classroom assignments for now. Plans are in place for future expansion at GVMS when population increases occur.



The new classroom space is taking form, partitions will be up soon.



The fine arts classrooms are ready for walls.

Donuts for Dads at Concord ES

Donuts, juice, and milk were served by the Concord Elementary HSA for all the dads and kids during the week of October 2nd. The Bentleys, on the right, dined in the Gym; while more dads and students had their refreshments in the cafeteria. Each day different classes were served in both the cafeteria and the gym to insure everyone had space. Dads were invited to walk to the classrooms to drop the children off just in time for class.

Photo
Not Available
Online

Mock Election at GVES

Thursday, November 2nd was election day for the third through fifth grade voters at Garnet Valley Elementary School. Three polling areas were set up in the hallways. Voters cast their votes for United States President, Vice President, U.S. Senator, and on three referendum questions. All parties were represented on the ticket, just as in the national elections.


Registration was held a week before the election and only registered voters could participate. Clerks at each poll checked the voter's eligibility and only then did they issue a ballot. Voters entered a booth to fill out their ballots and completed ballots were deposited in a ballot box. An election judge was close by to monitor the voting process. Students were in charge of the process and took their jobs seriously, as did the voters. HSA members were on hand to help at the polls.

At the end of the day, the votes were tallied. The presidential race was won by the Bush/Cheney ticket and the senate by Santorum. The three referendum questions were all defeated by a wide margin. The questions were:

- ◆ Shall School be Year-Round?
- ◆ Shall Seat Belts be Placed on School Buses?
- ◆ Shall School Uniforms be Mandatory?

Congratulations to the students, staff, and parents for making this election a model for their future.

An Invitation!



The Board of School Directors
of the
Garnet Valley School District
Announces the
Celebration of the

**Garnet Valley Middle
School**

**National Blue Ribbon Award
and
Dedication of the GVMS**

**Wednesday, November 29,
2000**

at 7:00 p.m.

**The ceremony will be held
in the
Garnet Valley Middle
School Auditorium**

All are welcome to at-

GVHS Scholars

♦ AP Scholars

Fourteen students from Garnet Valley High School have been named AP (Advanced Placement) Scholars by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level AP examinations. Approximately 13% of the more than 700,000 students who took the AP Examinations in May, performed at a sufficiently high level to merit such recognition.

Students take AP Examinations in May after completing challenging college-level courses at their high school. The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on the number of year-long courses and exams (or their equivalent semester-long courses and exams). At GVHS four students qualified for the AP Scholar with Distinction Award by earning an average grade of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. These GVHS students are **Zachary Braun, Shannon Frost, Vincent Gallo, and Jeremy Stober.**

Three students qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor Award by earning an average grade of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. These students are **Ramsey Akl, Lisa Bhide, and Peter Tang.**

Seven students qualified for the AP Scholar Award by completing three or more AP Examinations, with grades of 3 or higher. The AP scholars are: **Denise Chaykun, Jessica Conway, Rachel Dada, Michelle Ferreri, Elizabeth Moore, Arjun Ramprasad, and Kelly Tucker.**

Of this year's award recipients, five are seniors: **Rachel Dada, Michelle Ferreri, Beth Moore, Arjun Ramprasad, and Peter Tang.** These students have at least one more year in which to do college-level work and possibly earn another AP Scholar Award. Most of the nation's colleges and universities award credit, advanced placement, or both based on successful performance on the AP Exams.

♦ National Honor Society

Forty-nine Garnet Valley seniors were inducted into the National Honor Society in a special ceremony at GVHS Thursday evening, October 26, 2000. Selection into the National Honor Society is recognition of a student's outstanding academic and personal accomplishment. While outstanding scholarship is the major criterion for membership, the additional criteria of character, leadership, and service must be demonstrated. A student must substantiate that, within the past year, he/she has not flagrantly disobeyed school or civil rules, he/she has not been suspended from school within the past year, and he/she has been an active, participating member of at least one organization, club, or function at Garnet Valley High School or in the community. The minimum grade point average is 3.5 unweighted. Students are inducted into the National Honor Society in the fall of their senior year. The Garnet Valley Seniors receiving this honor were: **Joanna Anderson, Laura Arkus, William Barksdale, Benjamin Blanton, William Blythe, Alexander Boyer, Carmen Bucci, Joseph Butler, Justin Chace, Lauren Clarius, Mathew Clarius, Michele Consorti, Rachel Dada, Anthony Dambro IV, Debra DeFlorio, Nisha Desai, Domenick Fabii, Sarah Fedak, Jaclyn Feldmayer, Michelle Ferreri, Coleen Freidel, Gale Girolami, Sarah Hamel, Ryan Hamilton, Jennifer Hsiung, Jennifer Hummel, Michael Keiser, Heather Kirby, Adam Lawthers, Frederick Lombard, Jacqueline Lowthert, Charles Mitchell, Elizabeth Moore, Elizabeth Mulhern, Victoria Nichols, Justin Petrone, Arjun Ramprasad, Jack Rodgers, Amanda Santore, Rebecca Santore, Ellen Straut, Christine Struble, Peter Tang, Jaclyn Vella, Gregory Voshell, Bronwyn Westraad, Jolene Westraad, Caitlyn Woods, Abby Yenkinson.**



Community Notes:

Community Chorus meeting every Monday night at GVHS. No experience required.

GVCEA Adult Evening School is in full swing. New classes start February, 2001. *Contact GVCEA at 610-361-2863.*

Flu Vaccine Success

We had a great turnout of **512**, up from 429 last year.

"Babes in Toyland" coming to GVMS on December 9th & 10th. Tickets go on sale soon. Come to this family event.

Ticket information call 610-358-4748

Garnet Valley Middle School Note:

All homework requests for students absent three days or longer should be phoned in on line 610-579-5100. Do not leave the message on the attendance answering machine.



Only on the Web! Color photos and more articles!

The new GVMS gym held the entire student body and staff for a Pep Rally on October 27th. All the sports teams and new teachers were introduced. The winners of the pumpkin raffle were announced. The highlight of the rally was a student vs. the faculty volleyball game. Check the web for results. While there see the October 20th visit of the Concordville Volunteer Fire Company #59 helping to celebrate the launch of the Garnet Valley website. The photos taken of the students on the soccer field and the fifth grade band are terrific!

Visit www.garnetvalleyschools.com today.

www.garnetvalleyschools.com



The website is now online.

On Friday, October 20th

GVES celebrated the website with a launch celebration rally on the

soccer field. Students launched paper airplanes on a countdown given by Mrs. Blocksom. The Launch was accompanied by the fifth grade band, led by Mr. Hoey. The garnet colored paper planes were decorated with the website URL (the web address) and custom folded by each student. Pennants were given to each student with the web address on them to hang over their computers at home. On returning to their classrooms, rocket pops were served. Fire Company 59 from Concordville joined the celebration and brought their brand new tower truck to allow photos to be taken of the occasion. (See photos on the website.)



Students, parents, faculty, staff, and community members will find the site useful in keeping current with the Garnet Valley District calendars, menus, newsletters (especially this one in full color), school board condensed minutes, press releases, job openings, and contact information, etc. The site is a work in progress and should be checked often as new information is added.

Voices of the Valley is published by Garnet Valley School District.
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Communications Specialist: Sue Fritz

Voices of the Valley

News You Can Use About Garnet Valley School District

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School Board Meetings

Garnet Valley School Board meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. The Work Session is held the Monday of the week before the regular Board Meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The Finance and Facility Operations Committees meet following the Work Session.

Finance Committee Chair: Elizabeth Laird

Facility Operations Chair: Daniel Van Wyk

The Education Committee meets on the Tuesday before the Work Session at 7:00 p.m.

Education Committee Chair: Barbara Tarr

The Policy Committee meets per chair's request.

Policy Committee Chair: Jodi Dix

The Building Projects Committee meets per chair's request.

Building Projects Committee Chair: William Wilkinson

GVSD Board of School Directors

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Marjorie DelBello, Ed.D., Asst. Superintendent
Kathie Estock, Ed.D., Asst. Superintendent
Joseph F. Kauffman, Esq. Board Supervisor
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U.S. MAIL
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See this FULL COLOR Newsletter on www.garnetvalleyschools.com

