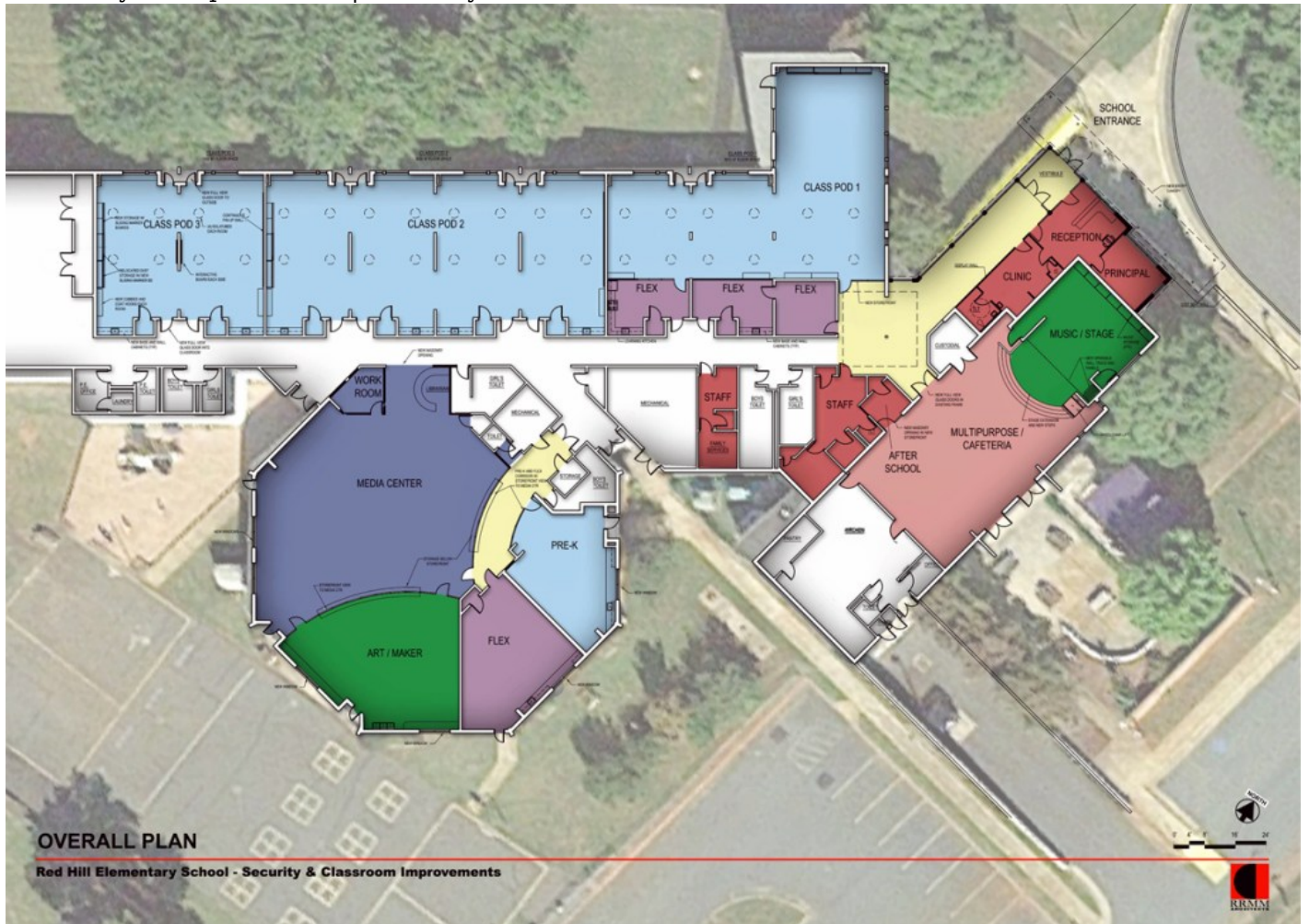


Design approved for Red Hill Elementary modernization
written by Newspack Team | February 11, 2016



Renovations to Red Hill Elementary School got one step closer to reality Thursday as the Albemarle County School Board unanimously approved the project design.

Planned renovations at the 163-student school would modernize and provide new furnishings for 13 classrooms and the library and add a new security entrance for visitors, county documents showed.

The school division has requested funding for the \$ renovation as part of the county's 2016-17 capital improvement program. If the request is approved, construction would be scheduled to begin this summer.

The request is split between two capital improvement categories, county schools staff said. The classroom and media center renovations are covered by a \$ request, while the security addition is in a separate \$300,000 request.

Plans presented to the board by RRMM Architects showed nearly 7,200 square feet of renovated classroom space and a new floor plan for the school's existing octagonal library pod.

The new classroom spaces will be semi-open, said Jack Clark, of RRMM. The new layout will allow lessons to be taught across grade levels, he said.

"The intention is to take the existing walls that run down the current spaces and place large openings in them," Clark said.

The more open classroom structure is more than just a physical change, said Red Hill Principal Art Stow.

"It's not just knocking down walls; there is a lot of professional development that goes along with that," he said.

Plans showed the octagon pod would contain the library, an art room, flexible classroom space and a new pre-K room.

Changes to the space include curved walls, a new corridor and eight new interior and exterior windows.

"This is what we are most excited about," Clark said. "The idea is to make this the center of the school. It's off the main hall, and it's much bigger."

The new library will be more than 1,200 square feet larger than the existing space, Clark said. The existing library will be converted into classroom space.

The entrance to the school will be rebuilt to include a security entrance, a waiting area, principal's office and clinic, plans showed. The new design will have visitors enter into a walled-off security vestibule and waiting area.

Documents presented to the board showed a menu of more than \$300,000 in possible additions to the project not included in the main cost estimate.

School Board member Jason Buyaki asked for more details on a \$69,200 possible addition for stage renovations.

"The stage renovations might be one that really touches most students," he said. "I'd like to see a little more about each one of these, but the stage renovation is the one I am most interested in."