Board of Education Agenda Abstract

Meeting Date: May 21, 2026
Agenda Type: Discussion and Action

Subject: Recommendation for Approval of the Schematic Design for the Carrboro Elementary School Replacement Project

Division:	Operations	**Department:**	Operations and Facilities
Person Responsible:	Al Ciarochi, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, David Contreras, Executive Director of Facilities and Capital Projects	**Feedback Requested From:**	LS3P Architects, Timmons Engineering, Carrboro ES Design Committee, CHCCS Executive Design Committee, Community Members, NC Department of Public Instruction,

Strategic Plan Alignment: Equitable and Transparent Fiscal Stewardship and Operations

Previous Work Session (Y/N):	No	Date:
Previous Discussion and Action (Y/N):	No	Date:

Attachment(s):
2026-0521_CES Replacement_Board of Education Meeting.pdf

PURPOSE:
Seeking CHCCS Board of Education approval of the schematic design, as recommended by district staff and the architect, for the Carrboro Elementary School replacement project.

BACKGROUND:

Carrboro Elementary School Replacement Project Summary

The Carrboro Elementary School Replacement project is progressing forward since the initial proposed school site layout was presented to the Board of Education at the February 19, 2026 meeting. The project is replacing the current facility while ensuring school operations continue without interruption with the end goal being to provide a modern, safe, and sustainable learning environment that meets educational needs and respects the community and natural surroundings.

Project Timeline and Milestones

Community engagement and listening sessions began in January 2026 and have been ongoing in order

to receive as much input as possible. The design is expected to be completed by January 2027, with construction starting in Spring 2027. Barring any delays, the new Carrboro Elementary is scheduled to open for the Fall 2028 semester, and final site work will finish by January 2029. Demolition of the existing school will occur after the new building opens to minimize disruption.

Project Team

The project is supported by a comprehensive team that includes a project management firm, architectural and engineering consultants, and a construction management team. The project management firm is led by Turner & Townsend Heary. The design team, led by LS3P, includes architects, interior designers, and engineers specializing in civil, structural, mechanical, and landscape disciplines. Clancy & Theys is providing construction management services, ensuring coordination, safety, and schedule control throughout the project.

Community and Student Engagement

Early engagement has involved teachers, parents, students, Town of Carrboro staff, and the broader community. Ongoing engagement, as necessary, will continue throughout design and construction to ensure transparency and incorporate stakeholder feedback.

Design Process and Schedule

This project has followed a structured design process, including conceptual design, massing studies, schematic design, design development, and construction documents. This phased approach has enabled option evaluation, layout refinement, and alignment with budget and schedule.

Key Design Considerations

Several critical factors guide design decisions. The existing Carrboro Elementary must remain operational during construction, requiring careful phasing and temporary access. The design must allow students to occupy the new school before demolishing the existing building and completing final site work. Safety, security, and efficient traffic flow, including parent drop-off, bus circulation, and one-way patterns, are key considerations. The design also aims to minimize site disturbance, preserve tree buffers (to the greatest extent possible), use existing cleared areas, and reduce impacts on streams and wetlands. Sustainability, budget, and schedule control remain central priorities.

Schematic Design Process Overview

The schematic design phase for the Carrboro Elementary Replacement Project represents the critical first step in transforming the district's vision for a modernized elementary school into a functional and buildable design solution. This phase establishes the overall layout, educational functionality, building systems approach, site organization, and project character while ensuring the new facility aligns with

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools' educational goals, operational needs, budget constraints, and long-term community expectations.

The process began with extensive collaboration between Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS), the design team, and key stakeholders to identify the educational, operational, and community priorities for the replacement school. School district leadership, administrators, teachers, facility staff, and community members provided input regarding instructional needs, student capacity, safety and security considerations, traffic circulation, technology integration, and the desired learning environment for students and staff. Because Carrboro Elementary serves as an important community asset, stakeholder engagement has been essential throughout the process in ensuring the replacement facility reflects both educational best practices and community values.

The architectural team initially led the schematic design process by translating the district's goals into preliminary design concepts and building layouts. Their role included developing conceptual floor plans, classroom organization, site circulation studies, building massing concepts, and exterior architectural character for the new school. The architects also coordinated design discussions related to student flow, collaborative learning spaces, administrative functions, cafeteria and media center placement, playground areas, and campus accessibility. Throughout the process, the architects ensured the design complies with educational facility standards, local/state building codes, ADA accessibility requirements, and local zoning regulations.

Engineering consultants supported the schematic design effort by evaluating the technical systems required for the new facility. Civil engineers analyzed the existing site conditions, stormwater management requirements, grading, utility connections, parking, and traffic circulation to determine how the new school can best function on the site while minimizing operational disruptions. Structural engineers developed preliminary structural systems that support the architectural design while maintaining durability, safety, and cost efficiency. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) engineers, in consultation with district facilities staff, provided conceptual system recommendations for HVAC systems, lighting, power distribution, plumbing infrastructure, fire protection, and energy efficiency strategies that support both student comfort and long-term operational sustainability.

Overall, the project manager and CHCCS Facilities staff played a key role throughout the schematic design phase by helping evaluate project feasibility, operational impacts, and budget alignment. Facilities personnel provided insight into maintenance considerations, building durability, and long-term operational efficiency, while project management staff assisted in monitoring project costs and ensuring the design remains within the approved funding parameters. Their involvement helped balance educational priorities with responsible financial stewardship.

The project manager and CHCCS staff coordinated communication among all stakeholders and consultants throughout the schematic design phase. Their responsibilities included organizing meetings, tracking project milestones, facilitating decision-making, and ensuring the project remained aligned with schedule expectations and district priorities. They also helped identify potential risks or challenges early in the process so the team can proactively address them before advancing into later phases of design.

Cost estimators are also involved during schematic design to prepare preliminary construction cost estimates based on the conceptual drawings and proposed building systems. Their role is especially important for the Carrboro Elementary Replacement Project given the need to balance programmatic goals, escalating construction costs, and available bond funding. Cost feedback during schematic design allows the district and design team to evaluate alternatives and make informed decisions regarding

materials, building size, site improvements, and system selections before proceeding further into design development.

Throughout the schematic design process, regular meetings and design workshops allowed CHCCS leadership, school representatives, consultants, and community members the opportunity to review evolving concepts and provide feedback. These discussions helped refine the design to ensure the replacement school supports modern educational delivery, student safety, operational efficiency, sustainability goals, and future flexibility for the district.

At the conclusion of schematic design, the design team delivers a preliminary schematic design package that typically includes conceptual site plans, floor plans, building elevations, preliminary engineering systems, and updated cost estimates. This package provides CHCCS with a clear understanding of the project scope, appearance, functionality, and estimated cost, allowing district leadership and the Board of Education to evaluate and approve the project direction before moving into the design development phase.

By intentional design, the schematic design process for the Carrboro Elementary Replacement Project has ultimately been a collaborative effort focused on creating a safe, modern, and future-ready educational environment that serves students, staff, and the broader CHCCS community for years to come.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
Capital funding for design has been identified within the Board of County Commissioners approved 2025-26 Capital Investment Plan, as part of the 2024 Orange County Bond Program.

PERSONNEL IMPACT:
None.

SUGGESTED ACTION: Seeking CHCCS Board of Education Approval of the Schematic Design for the Carrboro Elementary School Replacement Project

RESOLUTION: Be it, therefore, resolved that the Board of Education Approves the Schematic Design for the Carrboro Elementary School Replacement Project.