

## **Longmeadow High School-A Principal's Perspective**

As a resident, parent and administrator in Longmeadow for nearly twenty five years, I would like to share my thoughts on the high school building project. This will be one of the largest projects in the town's history, and the focus must be on our children and the importance of their education.

When considering a long term, viable building solution, we must remember that we are creating a facility that will serve not only as an educational institution but also as the environment where our children will learn the necessary life skills to become successful contributors to their communities. It is, therefore, essential that we focus on the attributes of a high quality/high-performing school.

A high-performing building should be designed logically to fully support all facets of the educational Program of Studies and to support the values and priorities of the community.. It must provide appropriate classroom, office, meeting and collaborative spaces that accommodate a variety of teaching and learning styles. These spaces need to be flexible to adapt to teaching strategies that will address 21st century learning expectations. It must be appropriately sized and equipped to support our widespread student participation in co-curricular activities such as athletics, music and fine arts. Proper design must include outside views, bright well-lit classrooms, and an efficient, comfortable heating and cooling system.

The building will also serve the greater community. When equipped with attractive public spaces, such as an auditorium, library, cafeteria, gymnasium, fitness center and thoughtfully laid out athletic fields, people will be drawn to the facility. The entryway to the building will have display areas that highlight student achievement. Artifacts honoring the community's heritage along with student artwork and murals will adorn the walls. Academic and extra-curricular accomplishments will be celebrated and spaces will be thoughtfully constructed so that everyone feels "at home." The exterior spaces will be equipped with ample parking for staff, students and guests, yet encourage alternate means of transportation by providing bike racks and sidewalks.

The strength of Longmeadow High School has always been the intellectual ability of our students and the determination to excel that they bring to school each day. When this desire to learn is combined with effective instruction and supported by a modern facility, we will have the formula for success.

This is an exciting time for our community! The decisions to be made in the coming months will affect young people's lives for generations to come. The final planning process will require vision and determination. As residents of Longmeadow, we need to choose wisely with an affirmative vote. With a project of this magnitude, where the stakes are high and the window of opportunity open only briefly, there is little room for error.

*By Larry Berte- Principal, Longmeadow High School*