

Baltimore (MD) Sun

05/23/2017

"Advocates continue push for new Towson High School by 2022 - Baltimore Sun"

Audience: 991,223

Source Website: www.baltimoresun.com

Advocates continue push for new **Towson High School** by 2022

A community group that wants to see the construction of a new **Towson High School** by 2022 began circulating an online survey last week, hoping to build support for the effort.

The survey asks participants to provide demographic information and answer questions related to **Towson High School's** future, including their opinions on building a new school and how that might be achieved.

The "New in '22" group, which is made up of parents and other community members, is behind an effort to convince Baltimore County officials to earmark funding in fiscal year 2019 to begin planning and design of a new **Towson High** that would be completed by 2022. Fiscal year 2019 begins July 1, 2018.

Group members say the existing high school is overcrowded and that its facilities are outdated.

Towson High was built in 1949 and is more than 200 students over capacity, according to its profile on the Baltimore County Public Schools website. Some students attend class in six portable buildings located behind the main school building.

The survey document is circulating by email through the PTA presidents of feeder schools to **Towson High School**, through 30 neighborhood associations and on the NextDoor community forum.

The group had collected more than 400 responses in the first few days after posting the document May 18, according to "New in '22" committee member Gretchen Maneval.

"We're just thrilled with the volume and quantity of the feedback we've gotten so far," said Maneval, a 1992 **Towson High School** graduate and Anneslie resident.

The survey will stay up for at least another week, Maneval said, adding that the group will present some of its results at a Baltimore County Board of Education public hearing on the fiscal 2019 capital budget scheduled for Wednesday night.

Maneval and committee member Steve Prumo toured **Towson High** ahead of the public hearing on Monday.

Baltimore County Councilman David Marks, who represents Towson and is also a member of the "New in '22" committee, and county school board member Julie Henn, joined the pair to talk strategy and tour rooms that hold key **Towson High** facilities, including heating, air and electrical systems.

"The first thing that hit me was the smell of the mold," Henn said of the electrical room. "If it's in one part of the building (the mold) permeates, and it's only going to get worse."

As a board member-at-large, Henn represents all of Baltimore County.

She described electrical systems covered in tarps to prevent water damage as "deplorable" and said she would advocate for design and planning funding for a new school in the fiscal 2019 budget.

"I was appalled at the conditions and quite frankly surprised that nothing has been done about it," Henn said.

In addition, County Councilman Wade Kach, a Republican who represents District 3, has called on proponents of a new Dulaney High School to come to the budget hearing and renew their request for a new school. Dulaney High lies in Kach's district.

After parents pushed for a new Dulaney High School in 2016, County Executive Kevin Kamenetz proposed a \$40 million renovation of the school in his fiscal 2018 budget.

The Board of Education ruled against the renovation funding in March, citing the advocates' desire for a new building. Kamenetz then cut the renovation money and diverted it to remaining elementary school construction projects in the county.

"The rejection of the piecemeal renovation of Dulaney High School was a great first step," Kach wrote in a statement encouraging the public to attend the meeting wearing "Dulaney red" clothing. "However, there is much left to do. Ensuring that funding for a new Dulaney High School is included in the FY2019 budget for BCPS is the next important step to ensuring that future students of Dulaney High will benefit from the state-of-the art facility they so rightfully deserve."

An email to Kamenetz's spokesperson seeking comment was not immediately returned.

The hearing is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at the Education Support Services building on the Greenwood Campus, at 6901 Charles Street.

The hearing is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at the Education Support Services building on the Greenwood Campus, at 6901 Charles Street.

Copyright

A(c) 2017, The Baltimore Sun

Audience provided by Nielsen/NetRatings

Highlights: Towson High School, Towson High School, Towson High