

Architect outlines design changes to new tech wing for Island High

By **LAURA E. WINCHESTER**

SUBURBAN CORRESPONDENT

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The engineering technology addition planned for Grand Island High School as part of the \$51.4 million capital project has undergone some design changes following two weeks of meetings between Cannon Design, the project's architects and engineers, and district administrators and technology faculty.

The 20,000-square-foot addition to the east of the high school now has a rectangular design rather than the curvilinear one, which district officials believe is a better fit with the existing buildings on the Ransom Road school campus.

At Monday's Board of Education meeting, Kim Williams, an architecture associate at Cannon Design, gave an illustrated overview of the addition's floor plans, noting that the fusion lab — a large exhibition and project work space — is now centered between the technology studios and computer labs. Overhead doors of 12 feet and some ceilings 12 to 15 feet in height have been incorporated to accommodate tech equipment and projects.

Two technology teachers who were among those having input on the design, Carl Koppmann and Eric Cohoon, said they are excited by the plans.

"It's shaping up to be a tremendous space," said Koppmann, adding that having access to the east field outside would be very useful to tech programs.

Cohoon said the fusion lab provides enough space for Grand Island to host the annual "tech wars," in which local schools compete with various projects, including robotics. "There's enough room for us to have bigger classes and for students to observe projects of advanced classes," he added.

Sandra Anzalone, high school principal, noted that the expanded space addresses some concerns raised about the tech program by students participating in Linkage meetings last fall. Some 200 students reviewed the school's various programs and made suggestions for changes. They said there were not enough courses or space to work in the engineering technology program.

"The capital project solves the space issue, and we'll be able to expand our program and offer more courses for college credit," said Anzalone.

Superintendent Robert Christmann said it's likely that the Board of Education will use the conference room in the new tech addition for its meetings, noting the area has direct access from the parking lot. Currently, the board meets in the Middle School Little Theater.

On another matter, William K. Zografos, vice president of Cannon Design, said the company is working on analyzing noise problems in the high school music wing. He noted that a "gentle rainfall" could be heard inside the room and that the roof's composition is being inspected to try to determine what the problem is and how to rectify it.