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Capital plans to be addressed in Belmont

A joint meeting between the Shaker Regional School District School Board and town departments will be held on Sept. 27 to address capital improvement needs between the schools and the town of Belmont.

Superintendent of Schools Michael Cozort said the School Board had just completed its 2002 to 2007 plan, and is currently strategizing for the 2007 to 2012 plan. He gave members of the Capital Improvement Program Committee on Monday a copy of the action plan for the district and outlined the projects that were currently ongoing as well as what projects are currently in progress.

Projects that he highlighted that should be finished by the time the new school year starts include the roof and lighting at Belmont Elementary School and Canterbury Elementary School. He said other projects, such as moving Gale School and considering a new front entrance at Belmont Elementary School, were also on the priority list.

Cozort said a new front entrance for the school will increase the safety, and that in the original construction of the building in 1985 it was not a consideration.

"It's currently in the middle of the school building," he said. "It's not what you want."

Cozort said that the moving of Gale School would allow the school district to do more on the site. He said that the debate right now in the school board is whether it is to be moved to either the Concord Street site or to the hill on Bryant Field. He said once the Gale School is renovated and moved, the space can be considered for a new SAU office while the middle school can expand into the Memorial Building if needed.

"We know that it takes a while for a bond vote to pass in this town," he said.

Cozort said that he wanted to have access to architectural plans for the Canterbury Elementary School to outline potential growth of the school in the future. He said bigger events at the school may facilitate the need for more parking.

"Right now it's not worth taking up playground space for parking," he said.

Cozort said at Belmont High School, space can be an immediate necessity. He said that with two upcoming middle school classes totaling 131 and 136 students each, the current attendance of up to 460 students can bring the school over its capacity.

"The school was built for 500 students," he said.

Cozort said they intended to ask about the new auditorium this year, saying officials did not ask last year because they wanted to see how the town would vote on the new police station.

"We know that the auditorium will conflict with the town's needs for a new library, new police station, new town hall," he said. "We are trying to be sensitive to that."
