

**ADDENDUM TO APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION RE:
QUAKER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT/200-210 CAMP MEETING ROAD PROPERTY**

1. All notices relating to this Application and any hearing related thereto shall be given to:

- a. Charlie Gauthier
Director of Facilities and Administrative Services
Quaker Valley School District
100 Leetsdale Industrial Drive, Suite B
Leetsdale, PA 15056
gauthierc@qvsd.org

- b. Donald J. Palmer, Esquire
GRB Law
Waterfront Corporate Park
2100 Georgetown Drive, Suite 300
Sewickley, PA 15143
dpalmer@grblaw.com

- c. Jon M. Thomas
Thomas & Williamson
Program Management
3270 Babcock Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
jon.thomas@thomasandwilliamson.com

2. A perimeter survey/description of the property is submitted herewith as the Quaker Valley School District Consolidation and Subdivision Plan (“Plan”) recorded in the Allegheny County Department of Real Estate Office at PBV 307, page 48. The property subject to this Application is Lot A (108.004 acres) as shown on the Plan (“Site”). The Plan includes existing structures.

3. A Proposed Conceptual Site Plan prepared by Thomas & Williamson, revised March 18, 2021 showing proposed structures, development and improvements is submitted herewith. All structures, development and improvements are related to use of the Property as a school.

4. The proposed use is “school” use, identified as a permitted use by way of Special Exception procedure. See Zoning Ordinance §27-301 Permitted Uses, 1.A., Special Exceptions. Part 6 of the Zoning Ordinance governs Special Exceptions and Conditional Uses, including establishment of general and express standards. The Zoning Ordinance does not establish any express standards or criteria for school use.

5. A Traffic Impact Study dated March 18, 2021 prepared by David E. Wooster & Associates is submitted herewith.

6. The Application fee is submitted herewith.

7. The Quaker Valley School District (“QVSD”) serves the students and families Aleppo Township, Bell Acres Borough, Edgeworth Borough, Glenfield Borough, Glen Osborne Borough, Haysville Borough, Leetsdale Borough, Leet Township, Sewickley Borough, Sewickley Heights Borough and Sewickley Hills Borough. The public (those communities comprising the School District) benefit in many ways from the services that QVSD provides.

The benefit to the public will be made greater by locating the proposed high school at the proposed location on Camp Meeting Road in Leet Township.

QVSD’s existing high school, located on Beaver Street in Leetsdale, PA, has served the citizens of Leet Township as well as all of the other aforementioned surrounding municipalities comprising the Quaker Valley School District since the district’s formation in 1956. Prior to that time, there were 10 independent school districts serving the 11 municipalities. Students from those areas who sought to enroll in high school, after the eighth grade, could attend Leetsdale High School, Sewickley High School or Ambridge High School.

Upon the jointure of the 10 independent school districts in 1956, Leetsdale High School became the only high school within the consolidated Quaker Valley School District. That facility, which is currently known as “Quaker Valley High School”, was constructed in 1926 and has served as the public high school for the 11 municipalities making up the school district since 1956. The facility has been expanded and renovated several times since its original construction. It is now 94 years old.

While many efforts have been made to modernize the existing facility, those efforts have, in recent years, become less and less effective and the financial investments required to sustain the basic operations have increased. The original facility was designed and constructed in an era before modern construction technologies were developed and in widespread use. The “load-bearing” nature of the walls of the facility significantly limit the feasibility of internal structural modifications. The need to reconcile the existing changes in the floor elevations throughout the facility, in order to enable accessibility mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), will require an inordinate amount of structural reworking and further reduces the feasibility of these modifications.

The compression arches (“flat arch” construction) employed in the earliest portions of the building further complicate the ability to execute alterations which expand the spaces inside that facility. The exterior and corridor walls must remain in-place. Removal or the creation of larger openings in those walls would require the tedious installation of steel beams, columns to supports the beams and new pile foundations that would have to be drilled many feet under the existing structure using a drilling rig inside the existing building.

If there were no other impediments, these antiquated structural features, alone, due the cost of implementing the work, the disruption to the educational operations and the complexity of the schedule required to perform the work, inexorably limit the feasibility of revitalizing the facility.

There is also a residual degradation of the facility in process, which is indirectly driven by the infeasibility of renovating the facility. All buildings, including newer ones, contain components with a predictable serviceable lives. While the components of the superstructure may typically remain serviceable for 75 to 100 years, most of the other components have a substantially shorter anticipated serviceable life. For example, the finishes should remain serviceable for 15 to 25 years. Mechanical systems have piping which generally functions for 50 to 60 years, however, the equipment (fans, pumps, boiler, chillers, etc.) should only be expected to remain serviceable for 20 to 30 years.

After these anticipated serviceable lives expire, it becomes necessary to upgrade or replace the components. The context for the existing high school, a building which includes an outmoded superstructure, has placed the school district in a position where it cannot continue to replace retiring equipment, where the superstructure is not feasibly adaptable and, in the case of the oldest parts of the building, where the superstructure is close to the end of its life cycle. It is simply not feasible to install, for example, new mechanical and electrical systems inside a superstructure that is in the final years of its life cycle.

But the limitations posed by the building's structural systems are not the only impediments to implementing facility improvements, as, over the many decades in which the facility has been in use, the school's functions have absorbed all available areas of the site. The existing site in Leetsdale is heavily constrained: by Route 65 on the southwest side, by Beaver Street on the northwest side, by a supermarket complex to the south and by a residential development to the north. The existing site is not functional. The on-site parking is extremely limited, with the majority of the parking located approximately 50 vertical feet below the entrance to the building. The parking areas are regularly fully-loaded and congested. Further, the build-out of the site facilities and the expansion of the building on the constrained site has also resulted in a traffic pattern around the building with poor site lines and intermingling of the pedestrian patterns. The vertical distance from the majority of the parking areas to the building entrances also poses a significant impediment to achieving compliance with the ADA. Accessibility cannot be achieved without unreasonably long ramps, exterior elevators or a combination of the two. These constraints prevent the feasible redevelopment of the site as well as the expansion of the building in a practical manner.

These impediments and constraints have played prominently in the District's facility planning studies which have been underway for most of the past decade. QVSD is responsible for delivering effective education for all of its students and must do so within predefined financial boundaries set forth by the legislature. Accordingly, not only do the physical and performance limitations of the current facility inhibit the growth and vitality of the educational program at the current high school, those same limitations result in a reduction in the consistent loading of the students within the various educational spaces comprising the facility - which in turn leads to imbalances among the staff assignments. In an operation, wherein the preponderance of the operating costs are attributable staff salaries and benefits, such imbalances inherently result in higher operating costs.

The District seeks to continue expanding its educational program for the betterment of all its students and to do so in a cost-effective manner which remains compliant with the mandated budget objectives of the Commonwealth.

QVSD desires to continue to operate its high school program at a site within the District boundaries and considered several alternative locations in various areas of the School District. Planning criteria for a new high school were developed by the School District's facility planning consultants and those criteria formed the basis for the planning objectives for the acquisition of a site(s) to support the facility. These objectives greatly exceed the capabilities of the current high school site.

Foremost among these objectives is the site area. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides guidelines for the acreage for various school configurations in its PlanCon Part C instructions. Under those guidelines, high school sites supporting Grade 9-12 should have a base area of 35 acres, with one (1) additional acre for each 100 FTE (full-time equivalent) of capacity. Using this guideline, with an FTE capacity of approximately 1000, the overall site should have an area of 45 acres. The current site, at approximately 14.55 acres, is roughly one-third of the recommended area. The conceptual plans developed in order to "test-fit" the proposed high school building on the proposed site demonstrate that the developed area of 47.3 acres comports with the PDE site planning guidelines.

In addition to the benefits brought to the public by way of an improved educational facility, the new facility located at the proposed site will provide the following improvements, some of which, in the absence of the development, would leave failed conditions uncorrected:

- a) The on-site parking will be more than double that of the current amount at the existing facility;
- b) Car and bus traffic will be segregated and routed over appropriately sloped roadways;
- c) Pedestrian walkways will be isolated and safer than the current conditions;
- d) Vehicular access to and from of the site will be improved;
- e) Stormwater management will be provided and will benefit all downstream properties;
- f) Water quality basins will be constructed in order to offset any environmental impacts from the proposed impervious areas;
- g) Improvements will be made to the existing unstable site conditions adjacent Camp Meeting Road;
- h) The existing streambed adjacent Camp Meeting Road will be stabilized;
- i) Classrooms will be designed to provide flexible classroom layouts to enhance the learning climate and support departmental collaboration;
- j) Classroom deficiencies at the existing current high school, which deficiencies include undersized classrooms, numerous spaces without windows or natural light, and spaces with poor climate control, low ceilings and sound issues, will be completely eliminated;
- k) Special education classrooms will now be full size and located within the flow of the learning program, with support spaces being located near learning spaces. Current inadequacies with the Life Skills space will be fully corrected;

- l) Large group instruction rooms, special education resource rooms, small group rooms, dedicated teacher workspaces / offices for planning time, and additional conference rooms, all of which are either absent or lacking at the current high school, will be added to enhance the learning climate;
- m) Music instruction classrooms, practice rooms and storage which cannot be accommodated at the existing high school will be accommodated at the new high school;
- n) Significant improvements and upgrades will be made to science labs, art studios, applied learning labs and media center, to name a few, and each will be appropriately designed to meet current educational needs;
- o) Existing deficiencies with the gym and related facilities, which deficiencies include limited seating, limited storage, poor ventilation and sound, inadequate fitness rooms, no health classrooms, and woefully inadequate locker rooms which are poorly ventilated and lack private changing areas, will be eliminated; and
- p) The existing high school suffers from multiple deficiencies based on current criteria established by PDE. Although many of these deficiencies are permitted to exist under PDE's grandfathering rules, they remain deficiencies adversely affecting the educational opportunities available to students. The new high school will meet all current requirements established by PDE and significantly enrich the educational experience for all students.

The proposed location, therefore, appropriately accommodates the school district's needs for its high school facility and provides an opportunity for improving the quality of its program, and improving the life safety features of its high school facility. Additionally, the development corrects conditions which currently pose risks to the public.

8. Due to the criteria established by PDE, QVSD must develop the high school on 45 acres of usable land. Within the School District (including Leet Township), due to topography and other physical features, the Site is the most suitable land within the School District to relocate the high school. After an exhaustive search, the School District did not find any site nearly as favorable as this site. The Site includes 108 acres, providing ample opportunity to provide surrounding landscape buffers. In addition, the Site is large enough to allow engineering solutions to any and all site issues typically encountered in Western Pennsylvania, such as steep slopes, geotechnical support, streams, wetlands, etc.

9. The proposed use as a school will not be dangerous, injurious or noxious to any other property or person, and will comply with the performance standards of §27-701.

10. The proposed special exception will be sited with significantly greater than allowable buffer yards and will maintain the undeveloped natural woodlands surrounding the Site. Where the Site vehicular accessways extend to Camp Meeting Road, the Site entrances will be landscaped in a manner consistent with the surrounding areas.

11. QVSD respectfully requests that the Zoning Hearing Board schedule a hearing in accord with the procedures set forth in the PA Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) and the Township Zoning Ordinance, and confirm that the use of the Site for school purposes as a Special Exception is permitted.

12. The Township Zoning Ordinance does not set forth any conditions or criteria relating to school use. The only applicable criteria are the general criteria. The proposed use on this Site will not create any burden greater than expected for any other school use on this Site.

13. The Site has extensive frontage abutting Camp Meeting Road, a public road. The Site will have two access points along Camp Meeting Road.

14. Vehicular access and parking are designed to minimize congestion in the neighborhood. Improvements will be made on Camp Meeting Road at the main entrance to the Site to improve site distance and traffic flow entering and leaving the Site.