

Chesterfield panel considers building schools

New task force meets on recommendation to add 13 schools by 2022

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Building about a dozen schools to accommodate Chesterfield County's burgeoning population will come with a price tag of \$500 million to \$600 million.

"There is no free lunch," David Wyman said yesterday at the first meeting of Chesterfield schools' growth task force.

Wyman, co-chairman of the task force and a member of the county School Board, said part of the group's job is to review information on current facilities; examine enrollment trends and county demographics; and then determine the

Growth task force

Yesterday's initial meeting of Chesterfield County schools' new task force focused on identifying issues. The public is invited to attend all meetings, which will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. To follow the task force's progress, visit www.chesterfield.k12.va.us.

June 26: School construction, additions and renovations; Elizabeth Scott Elementary School; 813 Beginners Trail Loop; Chester

Aug. 28: Alternatives to bricks and mortar; Thomas Dale High School; 3626 W. Hundred Road; Chester

Sept. 25: Cost and financing of schools; Cosby High School; 14300 Fox Club Parkway; Midlothian

Oct. 30: Recommendations at School Board central office; 9900 Krause Road; Chesterfield

best way to proceed in terms of school construction, design, maintenance and financing.

The county's recommendation for 2012 through 2022 is to build three high schools with a capacity of 1,750 students each, four middle schools (1,200 each) and six ele-

mentary schools (900 each).

School officials also hope Clover Hill High School will be converted to a middle school to open in 2010.

As plans are made for future facilities, problems with current buildings also must be addressed. Next year, 41 of Chesterfield's

schools will be more than 30 years old. Three of those will be older than 70.

A recent school-by-school review of unfunded maintenance needs revealed that 53 of 61 schools inspected have major requirements totaling — where costs were quoted or estimated — more than \$60 million.

The majority of maintenance needs are related to heating, air conditioning, ventilation and physical security.

Asked whether the school system would continue to rely on about 300 trailers as supplemental classrooms, Wyman said trailers provide flexibility.

"They're probably not going to go away," he said. "A first-grade class might be 101 one year and 125 the next."

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