



Questions and Answers:

February 27, 2025 Town Hall on Doyle, Kutz, and Linden

1. If the district had to renovate all eight elementary schools, couldn't the architects and other building professionals be able to find creative solutions to implement the renovations?

- a. Renovating all eight elementary schools is an option, including complete renovations to Kutz and Linden in which the interiors of the buildings would be “gutted” and remodeled. Should the district pursue this option, architects and building professionals will consider creative solutions along with factors such as cost, construction timelines, educational impact, and long-term sustainability. This is why the district is opening a “Request for Proposals” (RFP) process to solicit proposals from architects on what a complete gutting and remodeling of Kutz and Linden would look like and at what cost.

2. Would renovating all schools help avoid overly high taxes as well as the potential negative impact on the local community, green space, and neighborhood feel?

- a. There will be tax implications for any/all work completed by the district, whether renovations or new construction. The district must balance addressing the capital needs of Doyle, Kutz and Linden in a thoughtful way to continue to promote tightknit local communities while maintaining fiscal responsibility to all taxpayers across CB. There have been several years of no tax increases since 2000.

3. Have you consulted other companies who can offer better HVAC solutions for Linden? It seems there would be options to avoid lowering the hallway ceilings.

- a. The district has explored various options to install HVAC in Linden without lowering the ceilings, including by utilizing vertical unit ventilators for heating and cooling in classrooms. However, these ventilators generate noise, which could disrupt teaching and learning. Currently, no solution avoids reducing space without affecting student learning or, in the case of low ceilings,

potentially student safety. The district will continue to explore alternatives by issuing another RFP for further review of HVAC options outside of those already completed, as well as an RFP on “gutting” both Doyle and Linden to potentially complete full interior renovations.

4. If maximizing student capacity at the schools is the goal, why is 6th grade being moved out of elementary schools as part of realignment?

- a. Realignment is an educational decision that aligns pre-teens and teens with similar maturity levels and educational needs. There is a significant developmental difference between a kindergarten and a fifth grader, let alone a kindergarten and a sixth grader. Space is also needed for the new full-day kindergarten program; our elementary schools do not have space to house sixth graders and offer full-day kindergarten.

5. If a school has a lower predicted capacity, couldn't this fact ameliorate the need to remove class space for accessible bathrooms because there wouldn't be a need for a very large classroom?

- a. The district strives to keep class sizes at the following (approximate) levels: K (20); Grades 1-2 (22); Grades 3-6 (25). We know from our enrollments in first grade versus kindergarten that we lose potential kindergarten students to full-day programs. Thus, if we offer a full-day option, these students will likely start with the district in kindergarten. Our special education population is also growing at about three to four percent a year. A classroom dedicated to properly serving a portion of this population is limited to eight students at most. However, the needs of some of these children are such that even though the state says we can have eight students in those classrooms, many classrooms serve four or five students so we can best meet their needs.

6. Could the classroom space gained when sixth graders leave the elementary schools be used to offset renovations that otherwise would take up more space?

- a. Outgoing sixth graders will be replaced by full-day kindergarteners with a lower count per class – kindergarten is 20 per class, whereas sixth this 25.

7. How does the district plan to address the rise in congestion that a larger combined school might bring anyone living near Doyle?

- a. A traffic study in partnership with PennDOT would be conducted as part of the construction process. The district would also have to go through a land

development process, which is controlled by the local municipality. Both studies could result in the need for road improvements, stormwater management, traffic management, light signals, and more. If a combined Doyle and Linden could be moved deeper into the property on Doyle's site, more space off the road could be created for that area and the access points and traffic flow could be reworked and improved, including possibly for Lenape Middle School. This could mean larger queuing space and traffic flow areas to separate buses and parent vehicles to create an overall safer campus for students, staff, and visitors.

8. Is the district aware that Safe Routes to School has shown that students who walk or bike to school benefit from increased health, cognitive performance, and attendance, and that these modes of transport are better for the environment?

- a. We are not aware of that program, however, if a new school was built, it would still be located in the borough on Doyle's current site. District records indicate that more students walk to Doyle than Linden. Doyle and Linden are less than two miles apart. For the "east" Linden students who would attend Cold Spring, the change would be an addition of one to two miles as Linden and Cold Spring are about five miles apart.

9. Is the district considering the impact on traffic and road safety due to families needing to drive longer distance to pick up and drop off students should their elementary school be located a further distance away than it is currently?

- a. A traffic study will be conducted as part of the construction process.

10. Details about renovations at Kutz Elementary School: What will be done? How will it improve the learning experience for Kutz students?

- a. Similar renovations as those being completed at the other schools would be completed. HVAC improvements would be included as well as replacing the section of Kutz from 1936 and addressing interior courtyards with poor drainage. The small addition at Kutz will enable the district to create a kindergarten and first grade learning suite in one area of the building while grouping other class levels with adjacencies in other areas of the building. The reconfiguration will also allow the district to create an area that would house several special classes, like QUEST, music, art, and library space.

11. Details about school features/highlights for a combined Doyle and Linden: How will it improve the learning experience for Doyle and Linden students?

- a. A new school can be designed with contemporary educational philosophies in mind, creating an environment that fosters active and collaborative learning. This includes flexible classrooms that can be easily reconfigured for different activities, break-out spaces for group work, and areas that support project-based learning. In contrast, a school built in 1960 may have rigid, traditional classroom layouts that are less adaptable to modern teaching methods. Additionally, new schools are built to meet the latest health and safety standards, providing a healthier and safer environment for students and staff. This includes improved air quality through advanced ventilation systems, the use of non-toxic building materials, fully accessible spaces, and compliance with current fire safety codes.

12. What are the formulas and calculations used for Act 34 of 1973 specific to elementary renovation and new building plans in Central Bucks?

- a. These can be found in the presentation given at the Nov. 20 Finance Committee meeting. The video of the meeting with an explanation is also available on our website.

13. I have heard the land Linden is owned by the borough. In this case, who makes the decision whether to keep it open or close it – the district or the borough? If it is a mix, what is the mix.

- a. The land where Linden Elementary School is located is owned by Central Bucks School District. The property, as well as that of several other schools when they first opened, was built under a local municipal education authority, which then transferred the school to Central Bucks when the district consolidated. The district will work with Doylestown Borough for building permits and any land development approvals that may be required for projects.

14. It seems like if Doyle and Linden merge, Linden will be knocked down. Has there been sedimentary ground analysis done to see what would happen to the flood plain? Would the houses downstream from Linden face issues with water runoff if Linden was knocked down?

- a. The district has not considered knocking Linden down. If there was future development on that site, the new project— even a school – would have to meet current storm water management regulations through land development

approvals with the borough and permitting with the county conservation district.

15. I have lived in other districts that have a slush fund/emergency fund for disbursement to different projects that need it in the district. Does CBSD have this? If so, how much is in it? Would it cover the renovation of Linden?

- a. The district has a fund balance that is allocated to various education initiatives, with some allocated toward planned capital projects. We do not have a fund balance to cover the renovation of Linden.

16. If Linden and Doyle merge, what happens to the teachers? Who decides what teachers will keep their job and on what basis is this decision made?

- a. The district will still be educating the same number of students at a combined Doyle and Linden school so we would need those teachers and staff at the new school.

17. What is the budget/finance numbers now that the option of merging all three is off the table?

- a. Updated project numbers were provided in the presentation at the Feb. 27 town hall.

18. Are the decision-makers simply the Finance and Operations Committee, or other people from the borough and district? Are they making decisions based on what is best for students, or making purely financial decisions?

- a. The decision-makers for the district are the elected members of the school board. Some of the board members are on the Finance and Operations Committee. The district always makes decisions based on solutions that are in the best educational interest for students.

19. Has the district looked at alternative programs like pre-K?

- a. The district has not explored pre-K programs at this time. This may be a focus in future if funding streams become available for it. Currently, and in the foreseeable future, our goal is to ensure our K-12 programming is the best it can be.

20. Can you share specific examples on how a school that combines Doyle and Linden will be a superior academic learning environment for kids? What are the benefits and added values?

- a. New construction allows for flexibility with spaces. When designing a new school, attention to collaboration spaces and flexibility of spaces can occur more easily than attempting to retrofit existing construction. If the decision is to build a combined Doyle and Linden school, we would engage in a comprehensive design process. Options also exist to utilize sustainable materials in new construction.

21. How do you measure the experience of walking to your charming school, nestled in a quiet, safe neighborhood, your neighborhood?

- a. There is no formal measure for this; however, it is something the board and leadership team are considering in the decision-making process.

22. After receiving the results of the renovation RFP, will there be additional town hall meetings to review the findings?

- a. Once the district has the data to consider, there may be additional town halls scheduled. If additional town halls are scheduled, the district will communicate the schedule through multiple venues.

23. When we discuss cost, what is the long-term cost of letting go of a highly valuable asset, like the Linden property? Wouldn't it be better to think of options to use the school (with updates as needed)?

- a. Whether Linden remains functioning as an elementary school or takes on some other use, the building needs to be renovated.

24. How much traffic will be concentrated in one area if kids are moved to Doyle?

- a. A traffic study will be conducted as part of the construction process.

25. Where in your current cost estimate does the district capture the additional cost of waste water management, traffic management, additional lights and other variables?

- a. These are costs that may materialize during land development. They are not accounted for in current projections. However, they would not vary greatly from what is already on these sites.

26. How can the community assure the district that we understand and support the requirement that students will be displaced during renovations (regardless of scope)?

- a. Even if the community accepts that students will be displaced during a “gut renovation” to Doyle and Linden, this displacement will still have a financial impact. We need to explore the costs to determine if this is a viable option.

27. Is HVAC the primary concern for Linden? I have not heard concerns of asbestos or other major issues faced by other school districts.

- a. HVAC and ADA compliance are two of the most significant concerns for Linden.

28. What are the demographics of Doylestown Borough? Number of senior citizens, number of people projected to move into new apartments with school-age children?

- a. This question is best answered by Doylestown Borough officials. However, the demographic study completed by FutureThink took into consideration birthrate and development rates as part of their evaluation of district school aged population change.

29. If some full-day kindergarten enrollment is going to increase due to influx of private kindergarten and special needs is increasing by four percent, why is the district looking to combine two elementary schools?

- a. If the decision is to build a combined Doyle and Linden school, it will be large enough to accommodate the population from both schools and allow for the creation of special education spaces that could allow us to bring children in regionalized programs back to their home school.

30. Linden is older than 30 years but does not have air conditioning. How did this happen?

- a. Linden is one of eight elementary schools without air conditioning. This work was not prioritized in the past. What the district is now doing is planning for the short-term and longer-term future.

31. Regarding space for HVAC at Linden, why not put it on the roof and enclose it?

- a. We are doing an RFP for HVAC. A contractor may suggest putting HVAC on the roof.

32. Is finding a site for students for two to three years included in the “gut renovation” projections at Doyle and Linden?

- a. No. If we do a gut renovation of a school, we will have to account for the additional costs of educating students in alternative spaces for the duration of the construction. The estimates given were for renovations that would be completed in two summers with evening/weekend work during the school year.

33. Do the gut renovations projections include all-in costs? There were unforeseen costs mentioned like land development – is that included?

- a. All of our projections include site costs (i.e., the work that needs to be done to the actual site/grounds). Unforeseen costs that could materialize during land development are not included. However, we do not currently have “gut renovation costs” this is the RFP we are putting out shortly at the request of the board. The current estimates are based on renovations that could occur without “gutting” the building.

34. A number of years ago, the number of total students in CBSD was level and projected to start declining. What are these projections now?

- a. We are projected to level somewhere around 17,000 students for the next 10 years. We will be doing an updated demographic study after grade realignment.

35. What is the key driver behind the proposed \$7.9 million renovation to the 1930s-era section of Kutz? HVAC/air quality?

- a. The 90-year-old section of the building will be razed and replaced with new construction. The remainder of the building will be renovated.

36. Are the district and the board considering the intangible value of a small, walkable Linden community?

- a. Our board and leadership team are taking into account the community’s passion and love for their schools.

37. Was the “gut renovation” option part of the original modeling assumptions for Linden, and if not, when and why did the “gut renovation” become an option?

- a. The idea of a gut renovation was first discussed at the February 13, 2025 Finance and Operations Committee meeting. It was discussed as a potentially viable option; therefore, the district is doing an RFP to investigate the scope and cost of the work.

38. What is the projected impact of each plan on the taxpayers?

- a. The district is compiling this information and will have details to share by the next town hall meeting on March 27.

39. What is the policy on distance for busing? What is the cost of busing per student? How much will it cost to bus the students versus the renovations?

- a. In elementary school, busing must be provided for all students living beyond a mile from their school. The district is also required to transport students to charter, private, and all non-public schools within a 10-mile radius, which is currently approximately 65 schools. Currently, the district spends approximately \$27 million a year transporting students to school as well as for field trips, sports, extracurriculars and all other transport needs. The district may be able to combine routes should Doyle and Linden be combined.

40. Why is Linden in disrepair? Isn't it the duty of the district to keep it in good repair?

- a. The buildings were evaluated by the architectural firm KCBA in 2017. Taxes were not raised in the late 2000s and early 2010s, so there has been insufficient funding to do construction. The building is safe but needs significant work. What we are doing now is planning for projects in the short- and longer-term future.

41. What is the status of full-day kindergarten and realigning K-5, 6-8, 9-12? Will this alleviate where to put students during renovations?

- a. We will have six schools involved in pioneering full-day kindergarten next school year (2025-26). The plan is for full-day kindergarten to be implemented in all 15 elementary schools in 2026-27. Grades six and nine will also move to the middle and high schools, respectively, in 2026-27.

42. In the most recent Business Meeting, it was stated that a combined Doyle and Linden school would have a 75 year lifespan while simultaneously reducing the cost by \$21 million. In this meeting, it was noted that multiple 25- to 30-year-old schools need major renovations. In a 1999 study, the National Council of Structural Engineer Associations found there is no difference on the data for a school that is 35+ years old or a 14-year-old school in terms of needed renovations. The renovation figures showed a \$7.6 million deviation. How are you sure a combined Doyle and Linden school is \$1.2M less than renovating?

- a. The data regarding a useful life of 75 years on new construction was provided by an architectural firm and is generally considered the industry standard on new construction of school facilities. The schools built in the 1990s and 2000s are

due for standard midlife maintenance, which can be costly, but not necessarily major renovations. The district is trying to avoid delaying midlife maintenance on the buildings that would require major renovations. The reduction in the combined Doyle and Linden estimate was related to lower costs based on bids both in our district and elsewhere as well as aa refinement of what square footage we would need for the smaller combined borough school. As for the referenced study, the district has been unable to locate this research, but will continue to investigate in preparation for the next town hall on March 27.