



Questions and Answers:

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

- 1. If Linden received a “gut” renovation, what would the construction schedule be and how would it affect students? Would students have to be relocated?**

Students would have to be relocated because a “gut” renovation would involve the removal of everything inside the building, essentially leaving the “shell” of the building. If there's a gut renovation, students would have to be moved off-site for at least two school years. If a gut renovation is chosen, we will work to create a comprehensive schedule and plans for students being educated at alternate locations.

- 2. Is there an option to renovate Linden but not a “gut” renovation?**

Yes, one of the initial options for the Update the Eight project was to renovate all eight elementary schools. This option is different than a “gut” renovation option for Linden. The district has yet to receive an estimated cost for a gut renovation.

- 3. Does the property configuration at Linden allow for a total new build behind Linden.**

No.

- 4. Can you just build a new Linden?**

No. For a new school to be Act 34 compliant, we would have to build a building for a larger student population.

- 5. Is there a possibility an addition could be built onto Linden on its current footprint, such as on the soccer field?**

This approach is not feasible due to regulations that limit school renovations to replacing no more than 20% of a building within a 20-year period.

- 6. Does Act 34 apply to schools that are being built in rural areas?**

Yes.

- 7. Has the district notified the community about the idea of a referendum to go beyond the Act 34 regulations and what that process would entail? Has the district conducted a survey to assess the community's opinion about a referendum?**

There has been no specific mass communication explaining the possibility of a referendum to the community. However, the subject of the need for a referendum should a new building not adhere to Act 34 regulations has been discussed at numerous board and committee meetings as well as the town halls. As background, there have only been two referenda that have passed in Pennsylvania. Most recently, North Penn had their referendum to move ninth grade into the high school defeated.

- 8. Is it correct that there is currently about a \$1 million difference between the options to renovate all eight schools and renovate six schools and build a new combined Doyle and Linden?**

At this time, yes.

- 9. There is a belief that the section behind Doyle and Lenape may be wetlands. Is this the case and will this be investigated?**

The district will investigate again. However, based on our preliminary planning, the area where the building would be situated does not lie in that plain.

- 10. With an Act 34-compliant Doyle and Linden school on the Doyle property, what is the margin for growth if student population rises?**

As part of the district's long-term facilities planning, a demographic study was conducted to project enrollment trends through 2033. The study indicates that overall student population levels are expected to remain stable over the next 10 to 15 years. The new facility would accommodate current student populations of Doyle and Linden Elementary schools, with the exception of approximately 100 students from Linden who currently attend East and would be reassigned. We do not believe there is a need to increase capacity at this time.

- 11. Are there benefits to smaller schools in terms of safety and response to emergency incidents?**

The district has an exceptional level of collaboration with local municipalities and law enforcement agencies. District officials meet every other month with all local police chiefs to maintain open lines of communication and align our security strategies with law enforcement best practices. Our commitment to safety is reflected in these strong partnerships, which ensure a coordinated and proactive approach to school security.

It is important to stress that schools the size planned for a combined Doyle and Linden are not inherently unsafe; CBSD schools of similar size currently operate safely and effectively within our district.

12. Why is there a \$20 million difference from previous estimates on the cost of building a combined Doyle and Linden?

The district successfully reduced both the cost per square foot and the overall square footage of the planned construction. The cost per square foot was determined based on the bids received, which allowed for more favorable pricing. Additionally, multiple iterations of the Act 34 calculation were conducted—reviewing and refining plans two to three times—to optimize the use of available space.

13. What are the tax implications on homeowners?

As the district plans for major school renovations, it's important to understand how funding and taxes are connected. Right now, the district has very little debt because previous school boards chose to pay it down. However, with aging buildings and necessary improvements, new debt will need to be taken on in a responsible way to fund these projects while maintaining CBSD's excellent quality of education.

In simple terms:

- **Millage and Revenue:** One millage point (a unit of property tax) generates about \$3 million for the district. While the exact percentage varies slightly, for discussion purposes, think of one millage point as roughly 1% of property tax.
- **Current Borrowing:** The district recently approved a \$45 million bond to fund renovations at the three high schools and Mill Creek Elementary School. This bond will cost about \$3.8 million per year over the next 25 years, which is roughly the equivalent of one millage point per year in tax revenue.

- **Future Renovations:** To renovate all eight elementary schools and other district buildings, the district estimates needing \$260 million over about eight years. Instead of borrowing all at once, the district would take out bonds in stages (likely in 2025, 2027, and 2028) because legally, the district must spend bond funds within a certain timeframe.
- **Long-Term Debt Impact:** By the time all renovations are complete, the district's annual debt payments will total about \$15 million per year, which is approximately 4.5 to 5 millage points of the district's total 138-mill tax base. This means a portion of tax revenue will go toward paying debt instead of funding other areas.

14. If a combined Doyle and Linden school is built, what would the Linden property be utilized for by the school district?

A vacated Linden could be used for a number of things. It could be repurposed for the district use or sold. The property is currently zoned as single-family residential.

15. A 2017 study from Cedar Rapids, Iowa concerns how a school system closed a community school and relocated students into another school. Have the board or the administration seen this study and taken into account the possible impact on property values for the Linden community?

The district will investigate the study. A combined Doyle and Linden would be approximately 1.5 miles from Linden's current location.

16. What are the limitations and concerns, specifically related to Doyle and Linden, to being renovated rather than “gutted”?

These concerns have been reviewed in previous Q&As. They primarily involve the low ceilings and narrow hallways at Linden. The district is hoping that through the “gut renovation” RFP process, more companies will come forward with different options.