

EDUCATION

McGarry pushes for PlanCon as school projects line up

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UPPER DARBY » Upper Darby School District taxpayers will be on the hook for tens of millions of dollars in capital costs if a state program to reimburse some of those expenses gets no funding from the state in the next budget.

School Superintendent Dan McGarry addressed the future of the state's PlanCon program as the district charges ahead with a \$27 million project to renovate and expand Aronimink Elementary School. Plans to build a \$65 million middle school in Clifton Heights are currently wrapped up

in litigation and other plans to build a new elementary school at 69th Street are in the pipeline.

"If PlanCon is funded and we are able to get our three projects into the queue, this community could see millions of dollars in reimbursement," said McGarry during his superintendent's report at the Jan. 14 school board meeting. "The continued delays and back and forth over the much-needed facilities projects and improvements, however, could keep us from realizing and reimbursement and are increasing our legal fees and costs for each project.

"We will continue to follow the state budget, be prepared to submit the neces-

sary documentation to PlanCon and will continue to push forward on each project in order to meet the timeline window if it opens."

PlanCon has been in moratorium since 2015 but may resume with the new fiscal year starting July 1 to allow new projects to enter its queue for potential reimbursement if the program gets funding.

A funding projection report made for the district by RBC Capital Markets early last year showed district homeowners paying about \$3,300 over 30 years to pay back \$106.8 million in bonds to fund the elementary school expansion (at \$24.3 million), the new middle school and \$15 million in other capital projects. The figures account for PlanCon not being reinstated and without any projection of annual tax increases that are to come in those three decades.

If PlanCon is reinstated and funded there's no saying how much the district may save through reimbursements.