

# Ridgecrest School

## Community Q&A

Updated March 5, 2020

The purpose of this document is to record questions of interest concerning the reopening of Ridgecrest School in Stanly County Schools. Answers are provided by district leadership based on current information received with the support of the Board of Education. As the district becomes further educated on the needs for the school, answers to these questions may be updated to reflect this new learning.

Questions	Answers
If Ridgecrest School does not open, what will happen to it?	Deed restrictions are in place for the Ridgecrest School property.
Can a private buyer turn the Ridgecrest School building into a private school?	No, this is not an option.
What is the estimated cost to reopen Ridgecrest School? How much of this cost is the responsibility of the district and/or the county?	\$1.2 Million is the current estimate. The Inspection Department and Fire Marshall have not walked through the building for inspection as of the date of this document.. \$300,000-400,000 is estimated for updating technology and equipment to be comparable to the other schools (can be paid with Federal e-Rate funding); as well, the library will need to be shelved with books.
Was Ridgecrest School gutted to keep Oakboro School open? Which politician(s) approved this?	No, cafeteria equipment was relocated to various schools over the years. This cost estimate is approximately \$100,000; used equipment is available.
Will a tax increase be needed to reopen Ridgecrest School?	County Commissioners will determine the need for any tax revisions . To date the county has well-above the required fund balance needed for this project.
If a tax increase happens, how do we know if the money will go directly to Ridgecrest School?	At this time, we do not foresee a tax increase for this project. We will be able to apply some current capital funds, and with the support of the County Commissioners, we don't anticipate a need to increase taxes. All government finance reports are public information.
Can we appoint a liaison to keep a record of the money being used for Ridgecrest School?	Separate line items to account for this project will be recorded by the Finance Department. All financial reports are public records that are open to review by citizens per request.
In the past, certain politicians told our community that they were in support of opening Ridgecrest School and then voted against it. How do we know this will not happen again?	The Board, with the support of the district staff, is responsible for making decisions in the best interest of our students based on the current circumstances and most accurate information available. Constituents have venues of communication to address the members of the Board about their concerns.

<p>Are there any grants that we can apply for to obtain more funds?</p>	<p>Yes, grants are available. The district will apply for grant funding applicable to this project.</p>
<p>Where will the money come from if we are already \$10,628,655 in debt from school improvements?</p>	<p>In the 2022-2023 school year, lottery funds will be available as \$2.5 million comes off the district's debt. The available funding will alleviate debt.</p> <p>The ¼ cent sales tax is being applied to develop safety projects, and are on schedule to be complete by the end of the 2021 school year. This funding also helps offset other capital needs such as technology, thus helping us have additional funding to do more school improvements district-wide. Dr. James provided presentations to the County Commissioners and City Boards concerning the use of allocated funds; please review these presentations on the SCS website.</p>
<p>Why were additions added to Locust Elementary and Aquadale Elementary instead of Ridgecrest School?</p>	<p>Decisions of previous Board of Education members are not at the jurisdiction of the current Board and district staff.</p>
<p>How many teachers and staff do we need for Ridgecrest School to open?</p>	<p>It depends on the number of student enrollment. With 20 classrooms, we anticipate approximately 300-400 students.</p>
<p>How many students do we need to reopen Ridgecrest School?</p>	<p>We are preparing to have enough students to offset overcrowding at other schools. In light of the mandate for 2021-2022 K-3 classroom capacity requirements, we expect to be within the guidelines of this objective. We plan to make the opening of Ridgecrest school a smooth transition for all involved.</p>
<p>Will Ridgecrest School be a regular school, or will it be a magnet program/focused curriculum like Oakboro Choice STEM School?</p>	<p>A magnet program is a possible option for the school. Another option under consideration is designating Ridgecrest as an intermediate school, grades 5-6; this option will be only for this area. If used as an intermediate school, the dual immersion program could continue beyond the elementary grades.</p>
<p>Will Ridgecrest School offer well-rounded electives/specials? (art, music, PE, foreign language)</p>	<p>Yes, we will offer the same curriculum options available at our other elementary schools. With the potential of offering the dual immersion program, we will have the ability to add additional foreign language programs.</p>
<p>Does the district have any family engagement programs (i.e., Scholastic Family and Community Engagement) they plan to use?</p>	<p>We anticipate Ridgecrest to be a Title I school. These federal funds will be used to provide the same family engagement activities currently available at other Title I sites.</p>
<p>Why will students come from Locust, Millingport, and Endy elementary schools?</p>	<p>When Ridgecrest was closed, rezoning placed students at these sites. All three sites will be approaching or over capacity in two years. This means we will have to spend millions of dollars on mobile units, which do not</p>

	provide as safe of an environment as brick and mortar structures. The reopening of the school will be based on the student population at the time of enrollment. The school zones will be evaluated, ensuring schools are not at-risk for growing beyond capacity.
Can an intermediate school with grades 4-6 or a K-8 school be placed at Ridgecrest School?	The district will look further into these options. This will be more difficult to implement successfully if Ridgecrest is offered as a choice option.
If Ridgecrest School becomes an intermediate school for grades 5-6, how will that affect sixth grade students who are interested in playing sports?	Sixth grade students will have the opportunity to participate in athletics.
Will there be a school resource officer (SRO) at Ridgecrest School at all times?	Student safety is the district's top priority. A grant is being written that will provide school resource officers. The district continues to seek ways to keep all campuses safe.
Is furniture available at Ridgecrest School?	Parts of the building have been used for storage through the years. The furniture currently in the building is not salvageable and would not be used for the school. Other options will be evaluated.
Will bussing be available for the students at Ridgecrest School?	Yes, students will have the option to ride buses to and from school.
What is the condition of the Ridgecrest School gym?	The flooring and part of the roofing needs to be repaired or replaced, as routine maintenance is needed.
If an intermediate school is created for grades 5-6, could we spark interest for students by adding vocational classes?	Yes, we can develop the programs that are currently available to students. It is important that we spark the students' interests and bring these types of programs to students before they reach late-middle or high school age.
What do Ridgecrest School supporters need to do to push this project further?	Be supportive of the district and County Commissioners moving forward.
What are the next steps in the process for moving forward with opening Ridgecrest School?	Discussion moved to the Board of Education's finance committee the week of March 9, 2020. Based on the committee's proposal, the Board of Ed. will address the County Commissioners seeking their commitment for moving forward on this project. Upon approval, our superintendent will be able to move ahead in applying with the Federal government to obtain a "school code" to open a school. The goal is to have a vote by the May Board of Education scheduled meeting. A second community meeting will be planned within the next month.