

# Edwardsville School Board Discusses Bathroom Renovation at High School

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Modified plans for Edwardsville High School's restroom renovation were presented at the regular meeting of the Edwardsville Community Unit School District #7 Board of Education on Feb. 26, 2024.

Many community members were present at the meeting to express their concerns about the proposed renovation, which is part of [a plan to expand the high school commons area](#). The all-gender restrooms will include single-user stalls with sinks in an open corridor.

Alex Metzger, the district's architect, brought these plans to the Board during their work session on Feb. 12, 2024.

"The single-users, the whole point of them is to be completely private," Metzger explained during the Feb. 12 work session. "They're floor-to-ceiling masonry walls, drywall ceilings, standard doors with a full locking capability, so that makes them completely private, secure and safe."

During the visitors' comment portion of the Feb. 26 meeting, several parents expressed concerns about the safety of the restrooms. They said it would be difficult to monitor the space, which is important if multiple genders will be in the restrooms at the same time. A few community members, including Madison County Chairman Kurt Prenzler, also spoke against the all-gender aspect of the proposed renovations.

Later in the meeting, Superintendent Dr. Patrick Shelton explained that the existing restrooms are bordered by a three-hour firewall, which is why the wall cannot be removed to create a completely open corridor. He noted that the sewer and water lines in the existing restrooms need to be redone, and this initiated the conversation about renovating the restrooms as part of the EHS Commons expansion.

Over the years, there have been many complaints from parents about the safety of the restrooms. Shelton said this is partly why they decided to consider other designs based on what other St. Louis area schools have done with single-user stalls and a common space for sinks.

"From day one of coming into the district, this has been a talking point," Shelton said. "'My kids don't feel like they can use that restroom. They don't feel safe in that restroom.' So the structure of the restroom was part of that conversation as well."

Following feedback from the Feb. 12 work session, Metzger created two new design options for the restrooms. These new designs aimed to eliminate any hiding spots and add a third entrance to increase visibility. The Madison County Regional Office of Education requires the bathrooms to have at least 20 toilet fixtures based on the student population and the restrooms' location in the school. But the ROE can approve plans with less than 20 fixtures at their discretion.

Metzger presented the Board with two new design options for the restrooms. Option #1 would have 17 fixtures with two entrances and a more open space. Option #2 would have 22 fixtures with three entrances.

Students from the Superintendent's Student Advisory Board also spoke about the renovations. They toured a St. Louis high school with a similar bathroom design last week. All of the students expressed support for the bathroom renovations as designed.

The Board discussed each option and suggested a few design changes to widen the entrances, improve access to the accessible stalls, and move mirrors to the outside of the bathrooms to keep the space above the sinks open for increased monitoring.

Board member Scott Ahart noted that the renovations don't address the "systemic problems" that have led to safety concerns in the restrooms.

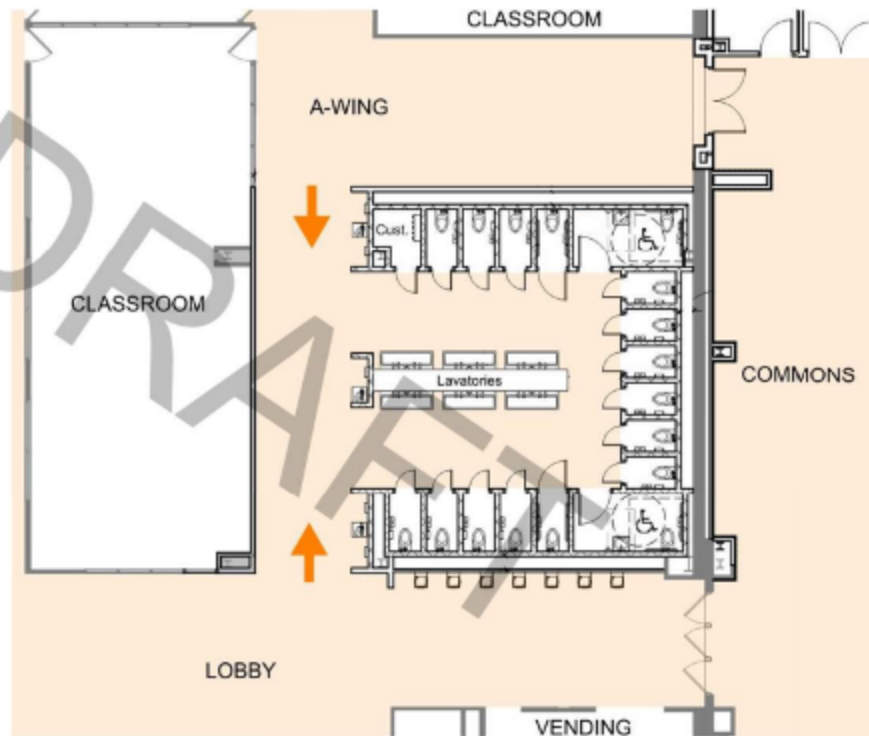
"This solves one problem, but we have to also keep in mind the root cause of this, because we haven't resolved the underlying issues," Ahart said. "I hope as we move forward with one of these that we keep in mind and we still go back and address the root cause why the kids don't feel safe."

These renovations would only affect one of three restrooms in the high school. The vote on the commons expansion and restroom renovation has been delayed until the Board's regular meeting on March 25, 2024. If the construction moves forward as planned, it will be completed by August 2025.

A full recording of the Board of Education meeting can be found at the [official Edwardsville Community Unit School District #7 Facebook page](#).

## Option #1:

- 17 fixtures
- Provides two entrances / exits
- Opens up floorplan / design



## Option #2:

- 22 fixtures
- Three Entrances / Exits - not directly aligned
- Puts toilet rooms on all four walls

