

## Huntley High expansion work to begin in spring

By Madhu Krishnamurthy February 25, 2014

The first phase of a roughly \$35 million facelift of Huntley High School should begin in April as crews start work on redesigning the main entrance, new school bus and student parking lots, and a new field house addition.

The Huntley District 158 school board recently approved spending \$1.5 million on the expansion project for off-site traffic improvements, including building a second entrance and new access road connecting student parking lots to Harmony Road, and upgrading tennis courts, the softball field and other athletic areas at the high school housed at the district's Harmony Road Campus.

Last summer, crews installed synthetic turf at the high school football stadium and renovated the soccer and baseball fields.

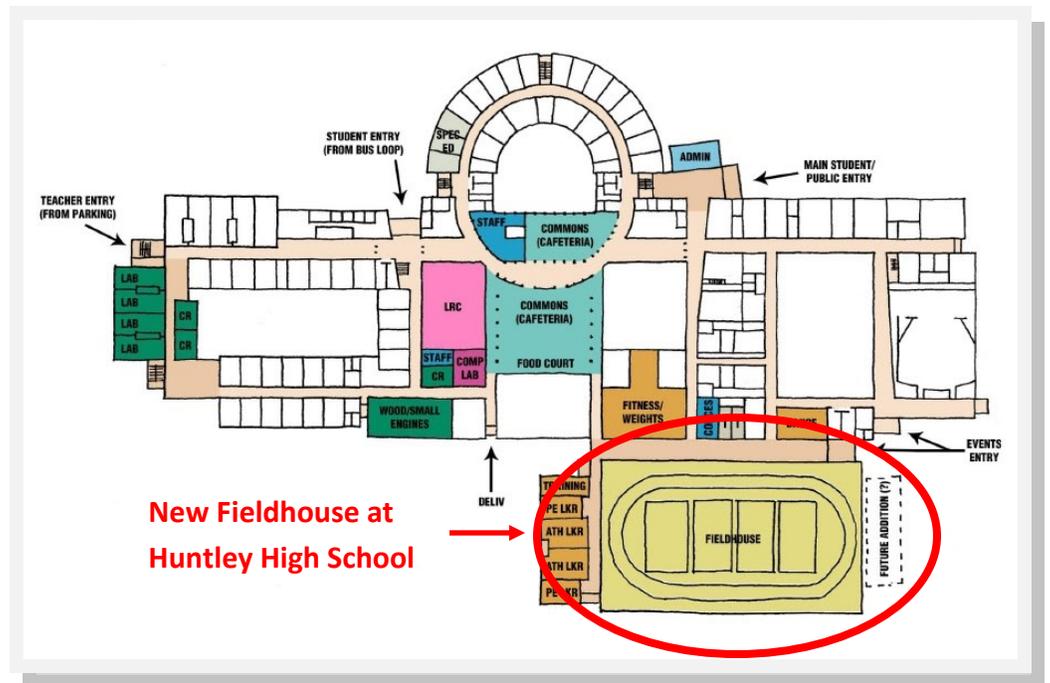
Additional athletic upgrades approved by the board include building irrigation systems beneath the softball and football practice fields, Principal Scott Rowe said.

Plans also call for reconstructing tennis courts at their current location, resurfacing the softball field and discus area, and adding stadium lighting.

"We decided a few months ago not to relocate (tennis courts) but to tear them down and rebuild them," Rowe said.

Building a second entrance along Harmony Road will need McHenry County's approval. Among the recommendations of a traffic study is installation of signals at two intersections along Harmony Road at Main Street and Hemmer Road. The McHenry County Board recently authorized engineering and design work for the two traffic signals on Harmony Road.

"There's a couple of hurdles still to get through in terms of what can happen on Harmony," Rowe said. "The hope is the road is open for school next year."



One of the biggest areas of improvement will involve changing the traffic flow and reconfiguring parking areas to address backups and conflicts between cars, buses and pedestrians.

Site preparation work for the field house addition on the southeast corner of the school is expected to begin this spring. Construction should follow by the summer and take nine months to complete, projected in spring 2015, Rowe said.

When finished, the facility will include a six-lane, 200-meter running track, and areas for pole vaulting, batting cages, a larger weights area, a fitness area, and mats room for wrestling.

District officials have said the addition is needed to accommodate future growth.

Huntley High School — built in 1996 to house 300 students — has seen multiple additions as enrollment has climbed to roughly 2,700 students. The school's student population is expected to peak at 3,000 as early as the 2016-2017 school year. The core areas and infrastructure of the school were never updated during earlier additions.

The high school expansion also involves building new classrooms and science labs, designs for a new library in a renovated gym space, a larger cafeteria and multiple common areas. Plans also call for increasing the student parking lot to accommodate 658 students; creating a new, 185-space parking lot for staff, visitors and student overflow parking; a separate school bus parking area to house 35 buses; and having two staff parking lots with 116 and 91 spaces, respectively.

The entire project is being funded through a \$39 million construction grant from the state. It is expected to be completed over two years.