

Media center needed at Bernards High School

EDITOR:

On Thursday, July 23, a *Bernardsville News* editorial entitled "Summer Homework" asked the civilians of Bernardsville, Far Hills and Peapack-Gladstone to take into serious consideration a proposed construction referendum involving the Somerset Hills School District.

The \$5.8 million plan to improve various facilities at all three district schools was then approved by the borough of Bernardsville Planning Board. The plan now awaits a formal vote by the Board of Education to place it on the Nov. 3 election ballot.

While I am confident that the Board of Education will approve this plan during their Aug. 26 meeting, I am concerned that the citizens of our towns do not fully comprehend the need for a new media center and library at Ber-

wards High School (BHS), as the high school completed its last major renovation less than 10 years ago.

As a BHS upperclassman, I speak for the majority of my peers in stating that this update is necessary, as the facilities in our current library are both dated and inadequate to meet the demand of 800 students. As someone who uses the library every day during the school year, it is clear to me what the current library lacks.

When I need to complete work via computer, I am faced with the difficulty of finding one that works properly and efficiently, if I can find one at all. To print a document often takes five to 10 minutes, as much as one-fourth of my lunch period or study hall.

Even if a student brought his or her personal computer to school, the lack of desk space

and outlet accessibility, as well as the absence of a student-owned computer-to-printer connection, makes this difficult.

Additionally, when I need to complete a class assignment with the aid of a book or encyclopedia, I am faced with the library's limited collection, a testament to the small space in which they are housed.

When my goal is to gather with classmates to discuss group projects, the library's finite seating and limited space makes this difficult. Instead of spending our full period working on assignments, we end up wasting time gathering chairs around a table which is already in use.

Oftentimes when we see the limited seating, my group and I decide not to waste our time, and instead we head to the clamorous cafeteria to complete our work. While we

face these problems during school hours, the main issue we face out of school is where to gather to continue working, for our current library is only open during the school day.

In short, the problems that my classmates and I share in response to the state of our library and media center – dated technology, sparse resources, limited workspace, etc. – boil down to one issue: the 20th century library we currently have does not fit our 21st century needs.

However, these problems can be corrected if the Somerset Hills School District's proposed referendum to renovate the unused auditorium into a library and media center is passed by voters this November.

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