

Board selects architect for renovation

The project: Historic P.S. du Pont School

By Antonio M. Prado
Staff Reporter

The Brandywine Board of Education selected the architectural and engineering firm that will design the renovation plan for the historic P.S. du Pont School in Wilmington.

The school board also approved the ini-

tial financing for the third and final phase of Brandywine's \$147.9 million capital construction project, approved by district residents in May. P.S. du Pont will cost the most to renovate-- \$44.5 million.

The board voted 6-0 Monday to select Anderson, Brown, Higley Associates as the architectural/engineering firm for the renovation of P.S. du Pont. The Renovations

Oversight Committee initially reviewed submissions by 11 firms vying to work on P.S. du Pont, said Barbara Meredith, executive director of support services. That number was whittled down to six firms, and the committee then ranked the top three firms that Harter or his designee could negotiate with, Meredith said.

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If the superintendent is not able to negotiate a satisfactory agreement with Anderson, Brown, Higley, then Tetra Tech is number 2 on the list and Buck Simperts & Associates Inc. is number 3, she said.

However, the No. 1 choice is excited to get started, Meredith said.

President Craig A. Gilbert, Vice President Joseph Brumskill, Nancy A. Doorey, Mark F. Huxsoll, Sandra S. Skelley and Olivia Johnson-Harris voted to approve the architectural selection. Debra Heffernan was absent.

Gilbert said Brandywine is lucky to have the Renovations Oversight Committee, which is composed of several volunteers who have expertise in construction, banking and real estate. The committee helped Brandywine make an educated decision about what architectural firm to select for the renovation of Pierre S. du Pont School, he said.

“That is the largest (school) renovation the state of Delaware has ever seen,” Gilbert said. “It is a crown jewel as we all know when it comes to buildings, location and architectural majesty.

“We are just very blessed to have members of the community who give of their time and quite frankly we’re blessed with a number of local, architectural firms that really, truly wanted to be associated with such a gem,” he said.

P.S. du Pont was a high school, which housed the Dynamiters, until it was forced to close in the 1978 federal court order for busing aimed at achieving racial balances artificially.

The board also voted 6-0 to authorize the execution of \$1.8 million in school building bonds, and this first installment of money will pay for the local share of planning the renovation of P.S. du Pont, said Chief Financial

Officer David J. Blowman.

The state of Delaware sold its bonds on September 1 to provide, in part, funds sufficient to purchase the Brandywine School District’s building bonds, he said. The bonds bear interest at a rate of 4.02 percent per annum, and the district will repay the state \$90,000 semi-annually, on January 1 and July 1 from 2006 to 2025.

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