

# **STC Gifted Center**

## **SchoolsNEXT Narrative**

St. Clair Jr. High

A 12-million dollar bond issue was placed on the St.Clair June 2020 ballot, and it passed! This will allow the district to make upgrades and improvements, including, entrance security, heating and cooling system upgrades, traffic and facility safety, roof repairs, athletic facilities repairs, and a new auditorium that doubles as a storm shelter. Therefore, this is the perfect opportunity to create a proposal for a new gifted educational space.

We need a new gifted center because we do not have enough room in our current classroom. Our plan is to renovate an already existing space that is no longer needed for its current use. After brainstorming, we came up with a list of potential locations. Since a new auditorium is being built, the old auditorium, choir room, and band room will be available spaces to renovate. We also discussed using the old Wonder Bread Building and the maintenance building. Our first choice was the maintenance building because the maintenance department was moving to the bus garage. However, after we started planning, we soon learned that the maintenance building was no longer an option. So, we decided to go with our second choice, the auditorium.

The auditorium is a logical choice because it is outdated and too small for most of our high school performances, therefore it will no longer be needed when the new auditorium is built. Before we committed to our choice, however, we made a list of pros and cons. Some of the pros were that it is a large area, has easily accessible bathrooms, and it would be convenient for high school gifted students to mentor us. Some of the cons were that there are levels, no sinks, and we will need to be very creative to renovate it. After narrowing our choice down to the auditorium, we made another list of needs and wants. We decided that a sink, a construction area, classroom, storage, and flexible seating would be our main priorities. Some of the wants were a kitchenette, video production room, and a MakerSpace.

We first went into the auditorium to take measurements. After we did that, our mentor, Steve Raskin, from FGM Architects visited our classroom. He listened to our ideas and helped us make bubble diagrams and plans. After much consideration, we decided which rooms and areas we would include. We included a classroom, conversation area, MakerSpace, video production studio, construction area, storage closets, conference room, and a small kitchenette. Next, we made different sketches and designs to figure out where we wanted to put each room. Then, we worked with Google SketchUp to get a more precise plan. After that, we did research to find ideas for a sustainable, safe, and green space. We decided to incorporate a rainwater

collection system, rooftop garden, solar panels, motion sensed lights, a sprinkler system, and fire alarms. We also decided to include a full glass wall to allow natural lighting. After discussion, we decided the glass wall would not go all the way down to the floor for safety reasons. We also created a survey for gifted students to complete. We wanted to make sure other gifted students agreed with our plan and make sure we weren't leaving out anything important.

After we planned, we created our video and slideshow. In our slideshow, we added all the information we found important, such as our problem, video, Google SketchUp, blueprint, possible choices, and inspiration. We also did research on gifted students. We found ways that their learning was different in comparison to other students. We found that it is not out of the ordinary for gifted students to have different needs for learning. Some of these are sensory and psychomotor intensities, Autism, ADHD/ADD, and Dyslexia. We will accommodate these needs with flexible seating, spacious rooms, and a secluded area for when students need to calm down. To create our video, we went to the auditorium and filmed ourselves talking about where each area would be and what renovations we would make. We also thought it would be important to include our problem and the bond issue information.

While finishing our video, we started building our model. We wanted to show the rooftop garden, but we also wanted to have a removable roof so the jury could see inside. The first thing we did was attach turf to a wooden base. We then made measurements to make a scale model. We decided to use base ten blocks to make our model. We painted the blocks grey to represent bricks, and we also used the blocks to make the different levels. We used balsa wood to cut out the walls to size. After cutting out the walls, we created the roof. Then, we cut a foam board down to size and covered it with Duct tape. To make our glass wall, we used recycled clear plastic from an old poster frame.

After creating the base pieces, we made the smaller details and assembled it. We used small white stickers for a scale life-sized chess board and travel chess pieces on the roof. We also used recycled materials such as CD's to create solar panels and computer parts for our air conditioning units. We used craft sticks and fake aquarium plants to make the actual garden. Our walls were grey and we made them a light baby blue to have a calmer color. To make the wall color, we attached blue construction paper. We used recycled materials to make other small objects and furniture.

We are very excited about the possibility of a new gifted center. We believe that it will be a valuable asset to our community that will help our school district grow.

Word Count: 958