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Overhaul of science room at Onteora High School has hefty price tag

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BOICEVILLE, N.Y. >> The Onteora school district is looking to renovate a science room in the high school that apparently hasn't been updated since the Route 28 building opened in the early 1950s.

The work has been estimated to cost \$500,000, but district Superintendent Bruce Watson said that number could be lower.

"I think that's high," he said of the estimate.

The district already has received a \$50,000 grant for the work from the Benjamin Center at SUNY New Paltz.

School board member Valerie Storey said at a meeting this week that the project recently was reviewed by the district Facilities Committee and engineering firm Clark Patterson Lee.

"The one classroom that we're planning on doing is Room 203 ... the chemistry room," Storey said. "It's so outdated that we have [a] water faucet next to an electrical outlet, which doesn't make very much sense."

The room also needs to have asbestos removed.

"We want to submit the plans [to the state Education Department] soon, get the [asbestos] abatement done during the summer, and then the classroom will not be used next year," Storey said. "It would be back in use in 2018-19 because the construction ... could be done during the school year."

Watson said it is not clear what equipment in the room has been updated over the years.

"Most of the equipment is old," he said. "There's individual pieces that were purchased over the years and they would bring them in and use them, but all the stationary piping, gas piping, water piping, valves, outlets, electric [are] all original."

Watson expressed hope that the district can do the work without having to borrow money.

"We hope to include it in the [district's 2017-18] budget, and we're going to use some reserve funds," he said.

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