



Board Notes

A Monthly Summary of the Hatboro-Horsham School Board Meetings

October 2021

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Marian McCouch, Treasurer
Theresa E. Brown
Tara Conner-Hallston

Eric E. Coombs
James Greenhalgh
Susan E. Hunsinger-Hoff
Denise J. Schultz
Scott Eveslage, Superintendent

OVERVIEW

During the Board's Work Session on October 4, Superintendent Dr. Scott T. Eveslage and Bill Stone, Director of Business Affairs, presented an extensive update on the Keith Valley Middle School Project.

Additionally, Dr. Sue King, Director of Education, introduced the District's comprehensive plan for 2021-2024 during the Legislative/Action Meeting on October 18.

The Board also approved a First Reading of two new policies: (1) Equity and (2) Civility, and authorized a resolution to borrow \$10 million from the Keith Valley Middle Project.

PRESENTATIONS

KVMS Replacement Project

Superintendent Dr. Scott Eveslage explained that the existing Keith Valley Middle School (KVMS) building has reached its useful end — with a number of issues relating to safety, security, lighting, HVAC, and ADA compliance. The current building was built as a high school in 1958 and contains significant design differences compared to a middle school that is suitable for the 2020s. For the past decade, the District has been considering its many options to renovate the existing building, including whether to replace the building entirely. Dr. Eveslage credited the previous administration and boards for their considerations of both financial and long-term facility planning. The District approached this decision through the lens of student learning and with the belief that the new KVMS facility should foster learning.

The design of the proposed KVMS encourages collaboration, inclusivity, and teaming benefits. The District held several meetings with residents who live near the site to gather feedback that was factored into the design. The building is being constructed more than three times the Township's setback requirements from the property line. Traffic was centralized to reduce noise for residents and additional landscaping will be implemented along streets bordering the site.

The proposed KVMS is roughly 156,250 square feet, which includes the District administration building, and the replacement and relocation of the swimming pool at Simmons Elementary. To ensure maximum efficiency, the building is proposed to be three stories to reduce impervious surface area and increase the setback from residential properties.



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Dr. Eveslage also presented multiple renderings of the proposed KVMS that displayed the building's flexible learning commons, library/media center, and public spaces, including the auditorium and athletic complex. Bill Stone reported that the pre-design and schematic design phases are complete, and the project has moved into the design development phase. Now, the District will begin working with Horsham Township in the land development process while conducting end-user meetings to ensure the building is functional for daily use.

Further, Mr. Stone reported that the project's estimated cost is \$105.8 million dollars, compared to the \$84 million that it would cost to renovate the existing building. Thus, the District determined that replacing the entire KVMS is more cost effective. Estimates show that the average taxpayer impact of the project would be \$13.46 per year in Hatboro (\$134.56 over 10 years) and \$20.22 per year for Horsham (\$202.22 over 10 years) — a 0.33% average tax increase per year for 10 years. The District will use \$11 million of accumulated reserves to offset the tax increase impact as the debt service is phased in. Mr. Stone said that bids could be awarded as early as June 2022 with a planned three-year construction period. Occupancy would be taken in the new school in July 2025 before the existing building would be demolished and athletic fields to be constructed in its place prior to the 2026-2027 school year.

Dr. Eveslage emphasized that the District has been and will continue to be responsive to the concerns of neighbors who live near KVMS.

Comprehensive Plan

Dr. Sue King, Director of Education, provided an overview of the District's Comprehensive Plan for the years 2021-2024, which is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). A committee was formed in winter 2020 to begin developing a new Comprehensive Plan, but the process was interrupted by the pandemic that spring. When work resumed, the committee analyzed several data sources regarding what the District had achieved since its last plan. In the new Comprehensive Plan, the committee decided to build upon goals from the previous plan — including a focus on deeper learning, supporting all children in order for them to be successful, and ensuring the creation of an inclusive community. The committee identified challenges, prioritized what will make the biggest impact, and set measurable three-year goals. The entire Comprehensive Plan will be made available for public review for 28 days before being submitted to PDE by November 30, 2021.

ELA Review

At the Curriculum Committee meeting on October 12, Dr. Elisha Gee, Dr. Brea D'Angelo, and Dr. Ryan Thomas presented a report to summarize the work done during year one of the English Language Arts review along with recommendations and next steps in the curriculum review process. Susan Hunsinger-Hoff shared an overview of their report, which established four focus areas of the ELA curriculum: student achievement, deeper learning, equity, and literacy as a critical foundation. She read a list of goals for each focus area.

After an evaluation process, two ELA resources were chosen to pilot at the K-5 level. The results



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of the pilot will be brought before the Board in February. The next steps for both elementary and secondary include looking at curriculum outcomes and assessments, clarifying essential skills and competencies, curriculum mapping of a scope and sequence of competencies, resource identification and evaluation, and professional development recommendations to implement the ELA curriculum.

The next Curriculum Committee meeting will be Tuesday, November 9, at 3 p.m. via Zoom.

Equity and Civility Policy

Dr. Eveslage explained the process of approving a new policy, which requires at least two full readings from the Board prior to adoption. He reported that the Equity Policy has been in the process of being discussed, planned, created and revised for roughly one year — with monthly updates provided at public meetings. Public input and feedback was gathered at a community forum on October 14 to help guide the creation of this policy. Dr. Eveslage said the feedback from the community forum will be shared with the committee and duly considered.

The Board approved First Readings of both the Equity Policy and Civility Policy.

Also, Ms. Schultz reported that the Policy Committee reviewed the District's Bullying Policy during its October 6 meeting, but is not recommending any changes at this time.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Eveslage reported that COVID-19 case numbers have slightly risen in Montgomery County, which remains in the "high" level of community transmission — despite positivity rates remaining relatively steady.

Further, while projections indicate that there may be another case surge later this month, Dr. Eveslage emphasized that the District intends to prioritize safely keeping students in school for instruction while continuing to follow Pennsylvania's masking order. The District expects Montgomery County health officials will provide specific metrics pertaining to the relief of masking as numbers decline, but until the state order is lifted, masking is not a local decision. Also, as the vaccine becomes available for 5-11 year olds, the District will offer a vaccination clinic.

Dr. Eveslage extended his thanks and appreciation to the Hatboro-Horsham Educational Foundation (HHEF) for continuing to support students in their educational programs. HHEF recently arranged for award-winning author Matt de la Peña to visit KVMS, offering an opportunity for many students to interact with him.

Business Office Actions

The District passed a bond financing parameters resolution to authorize borrowing \$10 million for the KVMS replacement project. This resolution has been prepared by District Bond Counsel and reviewed by District Administration, the District's solicitor, financial advisor, and underwriter. The Board also approved the disposal of obsolete equipment, an addendum with The Substitute



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Teacher Service, Inc., and an agreement with ALC Schools for supplemental transportation services. The Board also approved the Montgomery County Planning Commission to undertake an updated enrollment study.

Personnel Actions

The District congratulates Lisa Brown, 6th grade teacher at KVMS, and Tracy Sutton, high school nurse, on their retirements after 21 and 26 years of service at Hatboro-Horsham, respectively.

Reports

Eastern Center Arts & Technology

Denise Schultz attended the October 13 meeting during which the Eastern Center's budget for 2022-2023 school year was presented. The budget includes a 2% increase to help create an Exercise and Science rehabilitation program. A proposed plan to renovate the Welding and Protective Services Program space was approved.

Federal Programs

Dr. Monica J. Taylor announced that the Title I program is underway at Hallowell, Blair Mill, and Crooked Billet Elementary Schools. The program began on October 14 with a Title I Family Night taking place two days prior during which families were welcomed into the schools to learn more about the program. The third annual Family Resource Night will take place on October 27 at Hallowell Elementary at 6 p.m.

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

Jennifer Wilson reported that Explorations opened a partial hospitalization program on August 31 that will serve the needs of K-6 students in Montgomery County. During their last meeting, the MCIU members discussed organizational goals for the 2021-2022 school year and MCIU signed an agreement to purchase property in West Point for the future purpose of expanding its services in the county.

Public Comment

Between the Work Session and Action Meetings, a few community members expressed concerns over the KVMS replacement project. Three additional community members spoke in favor of the District's efforts to pass the Equity Policy.

Next Board Meeting

The Work Session & Committee Meeting scheduled for November 1 has been cancelled. The next Legislative/Action Meeting is Monday, November 15.

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