

Meeting Notes

PROJECT: Reynolds School District Bond and Finance Planning Committee
DATE: November 1, 2022
SUBJECT: Meeting 1
ATTENDEES:

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Karina Ruiz opened the meeting and led a round of introductions. Dr. Ortiz reviewed group norms and the group's purpose and charter. The committee has been selected to create a recommendation for the Reynolds School Board. This recommendation includes:

- The potential projects for inclusion in a bond package
- The size and dollar amount of a bond
- Prioritization of projects
- Ensuring alignment with long-range planning documents

The committee is not a decision-making body, but will act as advocates back to their own constituents (parents, staff, families, etc.) to understand more about community needs and priorities.

Karina reviewed the schedule of meetings and proposed topics for the committee's five sessions together.

District's Instructional Vision

Dr. Ortiz noted the Board's identified student outcomes goals. These include focusing on increasing the percentage of students who meet or exceed grade level benchmarks in the following areas:

- 3rd grade reading
- 5th grade math
- 8th grade math
- 9th grade students on track to graduate
- Four-year graduation rate

Karina then shared a presentation highlighting some of the ways in which education is changing, and the profile of the 'next generation learner.' She emphasized that a bond measure is a catalytic opportunity for a school district to take stock and prepare for the learners of the future. Highlights include:

- Demographics are changing: multiracial children are the fastest growing youth group in the country, and communities are becoming much more linguistically, culturally and racially diverse.

- Kids are multi-tasking and using screens with much more fluency, and communicate with speed.
- Young people have much more access to information and create content in addition to consuming content.
- These trends will affect teaching and learning, and change the way that classrooms and schools are oriented.
 - Acquiring information is becoming less important, with more of a focus on assimilating and adapting that information to lived experiences.
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is increasingly important, as we saw clearly during the pandemic: all children will need to learn how to regulate themselves and build self and social awareness.
- Student engagement and attention span is shown to decrease as kids move through school, so schools may need to change their approaches.

Question from the group:

- How does this information affect our teaching approaches? What do we do with this information?
 - We want to look at the experiences we want students and educators to have in the buildings. Then, we want to look at how design and facilities can support that experience. In too many schools, school buildings are distracting from learning (because they are too old, too cold or hot, etc.). At their best, facilities should support student learning and pedagogy, and follow the instructional goals of a district.

Bond Planning and Long-Range Facilities Planning

Heidi Hanson, CSG, shared the bond planning timeline. She noted that the committee needs to come to a final recommendation to the Board by December 12th, for the Board to put a bond on the May 2023 ballot.

The goal of this bond would be to support the outcomes for the next generation of learners and create a 21st century learning environment.

Heidi then reviewed some of the highlights of the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP), and other foundational documents that outline the facilities needs throughout the district. Some of the priorities that emerged from the research into the foundational documents. These ‘buckets’ are the things that this bond committee is being asked to consider and prioritize:

- Indoor air quality and thermal comfort
- Four oldest elementaries (Alder, David, Glenfair, Margaret Scott)
- Reynolds Middle School downsize and recreation complex, consider a K-8 community campus
- Minor capital projects
 - Safety and Security (for example, restroom remodels)

- Playground Upgrades
- Roofing Renewal
- Classroom Technology
- Title IX Equity

Karina clarified that the role of this committee is to review this list (which represents the highest priorities identified in the work done to date) and ensure that there's alignment between the prioritized projects for a bond, and the outcomes and experiences that the group is hoping to see for the community.

Heidi also noted the potential impacts to taxpayers in the bond, and some of the early possibilities. If there is no tax increase, it's likely that the bond could be between \$90 – 155 million. She also noted the estimated cost for each of the 'buckets' identified, and that the need is greater than what could be accomplished through a bond measure.

Questions and comments:

- If we do decide to replace a school (for example), would that decrease some of the deferred maintenance costs?
 - Yes, it would. Part of the role of this committee is to help figure out how we can stretch dollars.
- Based on your experience, do you find that voters don't get excited about a measure that is mostly addressing deferred maintenance?
 - In Oregon City, we saw that we needed to adjust the package to appeal to voters. One iteration was too focused on 'warm, safe and dry', the next was too aspirational and expensive. We finally landed on a successful bond that was somewhere in between. That's the conversation that's critical in this group: figuring out what will resonate, with also getting people excited about the projects in a bond.
- I'm interested in the idea of consolidating some of the elementary schools.
 - This presents an opportunity for the District: to potentially redraw boundaries, but also to think about the outcomes that you'd like to see for students. For now, we've put redistricting/boundary drawing on hold, in order to not distract from the bond planning process.
- When we're talking about declining enrollment in the district, it seems like I'm seeing schools in some areas that are under capacity, and some that are overcapacity and bursting at the seams. Do we have data that gets into those specifics?
 - Yes, the District has done a lot of due diligence around this kind of demographic data. They also ran some scenarios on what consolidation could look like. It's also important to remember that it's more than numbers: these are people. And we want to think about the impacts on people's lives.
- What was the last bond package like?
 - That measure was passed by a very slim margin.

Group Visioning Exercise

Karina led the committee through a visioning exercise. In two small groups, members discussed the question: What are the opportunities and experiences that are needed to meet the needs of all Reynolds School District students, particularly those from underserved communities?

Notes from the groups' report out include:

Group 1:

- School as a center for community/partnerships
- Create excitement and inspiration
- Build district community
 - Students don't know each other when they get to high school
 - East to West district boundaries (5 municipalities)
- Authentic relationships
- Athletics/team sports = community
- Outlets for expression/inclusion; exposure to future paths
 - College, military, career
- CTE hands on, centralized
 - Leveraging tech and innovation
 - Hands-on learning opportunities for kids, not just in high school
- SPED services/FAPE/SEL
- Connection/relationships with trusted adults
- Appropriate staffing
- Leveraging outside of school day after school
- Safety and security (fencing?)
- Small learning communities/cohorts = SEL
- Experience hope for the future, pride
- Representation (mirrors and doors)
- Technology builds engagement
- Infrastructure at schools supports tech needs
- Flexibility for evolving pedagogies and different learning styles

Group 2:

- School as community hub/gathering place
 - Get education social services, serving the needs of community
 - Builds trust with school, changes perspective on school and education
- "In it together" – welcoming to all
- After hours use (Wi-Fi, computers)
- School is part of community, meeting parent and student needs

- Safety: helping families know procedures, building a sense of safety, what a safe environment looks like
- Positive relationships and safety
- “Not on Glisan”: traffic and community connection
 - Currently not walkable
 - Bus is critical to community here
 - Safety for access: walking and bus transit
- Accessible for all: rolling, walking, etc.
 - Classrooms need to be adequately sized
 - Classrooms can be accessed by wheelchairs
 - Furniture is right-sized
 - Plenty of storage
- Access to technology
- STEM program is vital: not just traditional lecture style, but more experiential learning
 - “Freedom learning” program
- Kids are excited and motivated for school
- Programs that prepare kids for careers, for their futures (like 3D printing)
 - CTE options for kids, at HS and MS
- Schools provide the tech that students need (an iPad isn’t enough)
 - Providing Wi-Fi, devices, maintenance, etc.
 - Computer lab still feels necessary
 - Ready for technology to come
- Facilities need new systems
- Facilities need to be staffed and maintained
- Good stewardship of funds, not superfluous facilities
- Everyone feels welcomed and served
- District earns trust of community: students and parents
- People feel seen and heard, loved
- Staff are supported: more EAs, and staff aren’t going home broken and burned out
 - Mental and emotional health for staff and students

Next Steps

The committee will next meet on November 7th. Members suggested that it would be helpful to meet at different schools, so also help them get a sense of the facilities around the District. The next meeting will be held at Glenfair Elementary School.

These meeting notes are a record. If there are any errors and/or omissions in the foregoing notes, please advise our office immediately; otherwise these notes will be considered correct and complete as written.

Submitted by

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Attachments:

- PowerPoint presentation, 11/1/2022, 39 pages