



Warm greetings, Vikings!

As audience members entered last night's Board of Education meeting they were treated to holiday music from Mr. Mesoloras' middle school strings students. While each piece was special, their rendition of "Joy to the World" was especially enjoyable.

Referendum Updates - Speaking of music, the Board's referendum related work came to a crescendo on Monday evening. Mr. Matt Wolfert, Bray Architects, updated the Board on questions related to high school parking. The goal is to extend

additional stalls. Under a proposal for the Board's review, approximately 80 additional spots would be added. If a referendum is approved, the District would likely need to seek a variance from the Village as space around the high school continues to be at a premium.

The Board thoughtfully examined, one last time, the recommendations proposed by the Facilities Steering Committee. As a reminder, the scope of the project includes additions and remodeling for secure entrances at our District's schools; additions and renovations for new classroom and academic space, and an expanded cafeteria at the High School; roof replacement and HVAC upgrades at the Middle School; and other capital improvements and building infrastructure improvements at District facilities. Included are the acquisition of related furnishings, fixtures and equipment.

After almost two years of study and hundreds of hours of discussion, the Board brought the topic to a vote. They unanimously approved going forward with a referendum in April 2017 in the amount of \$38,500,000.

School Buses – As part of the District's recently developed Bus Replacement Plan, the purchase of four additional buses was approved by the Board. It is our hope the buses will be available for use just in time for the busy spring sports season.



New Telephone System on the Way – Our Board's attentiveness to safety and security continued to be front and center as they approved the purchase of a new Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephone system. As most would agree, the District has more than gotten its monies worth from the current system, as replacement parts are increasingly difficult to find. With an eye to the future, the Board was pleased to hear there would be minimal impact to the community and staff when the transition occurs early this summer. Nonetheless, there will be training for staff and communication to our community as time draws nearer for implementation.

Frankly, some of these essential needs would not have been possible without utilizing dollars from the District's reserves. A great deal of discussion took place at the Board's committee level. The operational budget could not sustain these expenses without a potentially significant and adverse impact to programming. It is extremely rare that such expenditures are made from what is referred to as "fund balance"; however, in keeping with the Board's practice of sound financial stewardship of the public's dollars, an exception was made for these one-time, non-reoccurring expenses (two of the four buses and VOIP).

Architecture and Engineering Proposals - The Board closed out their eventful meeting with a review of the proposals received from three architectural and engineering firms. The Board continues to be on track with interviews of the selected firms, Bray Architects and HSR and Associates. This will take place after their normal business on Tuesday, January 3, at 6:00 p.m. (please note the change in day and time).

Lastly, the Board wanted to express their appreciation to our PC and IC families, students and staff for their acceptance of our new “buzzer system.” The response from families has been largely positive. Change is rarely easy, but our Vikings have been very patient with the impact implementation has had on our day-to-day routines. Thank you!



Well, that is all for now. On behalf of our faculty and staff, we wish you and those you love only the very best during this holiday season. We are a better school system for your continued support!

I am proud to be a Viking and I hope you are too!

Steve

Bonus Item #1: Thought of becoming a school board member? We are preparing for the next election cycle. If interested in learning more, please feel free to give me a call in the next few days. There are several timelines to consider, and Jackie Brager and/or myself would be happy to sit down and visit with you.

Bonus Item #2 The community’s Mental Health Action Team meeting for Wednesday, December 28, 2016 has been cancelled. Our next meeting is slated for Wednesday, January 25, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. in the upstairs portion of the State Bank of Cross Plains building.