

SOUTHWEST SCHOOLS: DEFINING THE FUTURE

Monthly Update About Facilities Planning, Community Engagement & More



April 2017

After In-Depth Review By Community Members, School Board to Consider Master Plan Options

More than three months of analysis and discussion will culminate in April when the Southwest Local Board of Education considers which facilities master plan to put before the voters in November.

Hundreds of community members have been involved in the master planning process. "It's reassuring to know that so many people are so committed to planning our district's future, even those who have offered contrasting opinions," said Superintendent John C. Hamstra.

Community members have attended three Town Hall meetings, participated on community engagement teams and responded to the district's phone survey. Some provided dozens of hours of their time.

When the community engagement process started in January, more than a dozen options for the facilities were under review. The options have since been narrowed to five. At the April 20 school board meeting, the goal is for the board to select one master plan to ask the community to support. The board meeting will be held at 7 pm in the Junior School cafeteria.

"This vigorous process is leading to greater engagement with the community, better communication by the district and a master plan that we expect will shape school facilities for decades to come," Hamstra said.

Progress in March:

- More than 190 people attended the third Town Hall meeting and another 39 viewed it via live streaming. At that meeting, team representatives explained the five remaining master plan options. Then, in 25 small groups, participants discussed the pros and cons of each option and raised additional questions.
- The Educational Visioning Team wrapped up its work to identify educational trends and look to the college and career needs of students decades from now. The Finance Team identified every penny brought in and every penny spent by the district in the last five years and reviewed five-year financial projections.
- Fallon Research & Communications Inc. conducted a scientific phone survey. The firm asked 300 community members questions about district financial and academic performance, communications effectiveness and facilities. The results will be released this month.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Hundreds of Harrison area residents have been participating in the facilities master planning process, including at the final Town Hall meeting on March 30 in the Harrison Junior gym.

In Case You Missed It:

More information as well as videos of the Town Hall meetings are available at: www.southwestschools.org/facilities

District Aiming for Summer Installation of Modular Classrooms

Work is continuing behind the scenes on the modular classrooms that will be installed at Crosby Elementary and Harrison Junior schools. Production of the units will begin at the manufacturer once the designs are finalized. It's a complex project for the district because there are so many details to address ahead of time, including exactly where the classrooms will be located and changes in arrival-dismissal patterns.

Installation of the modulares will take place in the summer to avoid disruptions and distractions at the schools. The goal is to have the modular classrooms ready before students arrive in the fall. The district decided to acquire the modulares after enrollment at the two schools began soaring beyond projections. Average class sizes at both schools significantly exceed the average class size for public schools across Ohio.

Additional space will make instruction more effective. "Instruction and learning opportunities are greatly hindered by the lack of space in my classroom," says Becki Vieth, a teacher at Harrison Junior. "There is a corner of my room that I am unable to access smoothly without asking students to shift their desks, which causes disruptions. As I monitor student progress, I have to walk sideways through the aisles and climb over students' materials. We have no space for storage of materials, equipment, small group instruction and many other essential elements for instruction."

Facilities Master Planning | *What's Happening in April:*

Community Advisory Team meeting

Harrison High Media Center

April 13, 7 pm

Final meeting

Board of Education meeting

Harrison Junior Cafeteria

April 20, 7 pm

Facilities planning will be on the agenda



LEARNING IN A STOCKROOM:

With boxes of food stacked on shelves behind them, Crosby students focus on their studies. The room is used as a pantry and teacher work room as well as for instruction. Modular classrooms at Crosby will help to relieve the congestion.

Did You Know?

Southwest Schools has:

- Enrolled more than 380 students since July. With our 2017 senior class at 260 students, that means we've grown by more than an entire graduating class in the last eight months.
- Scored in the top 10 percent of Ohio school districts in the value-added category on the State Report Card. Value-added measures progress made by students based on their year-to-year math and reading scores.
- Collected about \$10.1 million annually in real estate taxes, about 32 percent of the district's funds, and about \$3.8 million from the earned income tax, about 12 percent of the budget.