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December 4 ~ Board Work Session



Dr. Cain and members of Cabinet presented an update to the Board related to potential ballot items for April. [The presentation](#) included projections from MGT at the elementary, middle and high school levels if the District moved in the direction of placing a new middle school on the ballot and returns to K-5 elementary buildings, moving 6th grade back to the middle schools.

NEXT STEPS TO ACCOMMODATE GROWTH

At last month's worksession, administration presented three options to accommodate

the District's continued enrollment growth:

- Build three new elementary schools and stay K-6
- Build two new middle schools and return to K-5 elementary schools
- Build one new middle school and expand the existing middle schools and return to K-5 elementary schools

The Board consensus was to move forward with looking at the option to build one new middle school and expand existing middle schools and return to K-5 elementary buildings. The Board requested additional information related to enrollment projections; specifically if we moved in the direction of building and expanding at the middle school level, when would the District need a new elementary school.

Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services John Schulte walked the Board through the MGT report and explained that once you pull 6th grade out of the elementary schools, and if you simply look at overall elementary numbers, the District would not need a new elementary school until 2028-2029. However, he stressed that individual elementary buildings may be over capacity sooner.

NO-TAX-INCREASE FOR ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS

Representatives from Bax Engineering and Hoener Associates shared that they met with city officials from Wentzville and O'Fallon regarding potential expansions at the existing middle schools and construction of a new middle school. They shared updated estimates, but cautioned they were preliminary numbers that will be refined.

CFO Rick Angevine explained that if the Board decided to move forward with a new middle school and expansions at the existing schools in order to move 6th grade back to middle school, it could be accomplished with a no-tax-increase bond issue.

Following the discussion, the Board voted to put a no-tax-increase bond issue for a new middle school, expansions/renovations at existing middle schools and safety and maintenance items on the April ballot. The Board also voted that if that no-tax-increase passes, the District would move back to a K-5 elementary model and 6th grade would be at the middle schools.

TAX LEVY FOR STAFFING

Dr. Cain and members of Cabinet shared additional information related to the need to address widening salary gaps between the WSD and neighboring districts in an effort to attract and retain not only qualified instructional staff, but support staff as well, and to increase staffing to improve student-teacher ratios and intervention support for students.

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Dr. Jennifer Hecktor shared salaries from comparable districts as well as plans and costs to close these gaps. Dr. Hecktor also presented projected staffing needs to meet the annual student growth and to staff new buildings. Mr. Angevine shared examples of different increase levels to the operating tax levy and what that would amount to in terms of potential increases to base salaries and the amount that could be used towards hiring additional staff.

"We have done as much as we can with the resources we have at our disposal," said Dr. Cain. "We have reached the point of where it is no longer working and the growing gap between us and other districts is problematic."

The Board voted unanimously to place a levy for staffing, salaries and safety on the April ballot. The Board will vote on the specific amount after it receives results of the community survey.

At the November Board of Education meeting, the Board approved hiring Patron Insight to conduct a random sample phone survey to gauge support for potential ballot items, including various tax levy increases. The phone survey is ongoing and we encourage you to take the time to respond should you receive a call asking for your input.

In conjunction with the phone survey, Patron Insight is also conducting online surveys for employees, parents and community members who may not be contacted by phone. Please take the time to share our feedback by clicking the appropriate link below:

[Community Member Survey](#)

[Parent Survey](#)

[Employee Survey](#)

The WSD continues to be the fastest growing district in the state, having added 537 students over the past year. The District's current enrollment officially stands at 17,335 students.

Next Regular Board Meeting ~ December 19, 7:00pm