Spring Independent School District
Bond Steering Committee Minutes
Thursday, July 21, 2022

The fourth meeting of the 2022 Bond Steering Committee was held on Thursday, July 21, 2022, at the Dekaney High School Ninth-Grade Center, located at 22351 Imperial Valley Dr., Houston, TX 77073. The purpose of the meeting was to review previous meeting content, to cover topics related to facilities needs and deferred maintenance, as well as technology, and to discuss a range of potential ways the bond campaign could address those needs.

Attendees
Bond Steering Committee Members Present: 42

Call to Order
At approximately 6:10 p.m., Spring ISD Executive Chief of District Operations Mark Miranda began the meeting.

Agenda
- Welcome and Greetings
    - Mr. Miranda welcomed the group and shared the agenda for the evening, to include Dekaney Ninth-Grade Center breakout tours; a recap of the July 19 meeting, in which topics related to Facilities were a main focus; results from a Thought Exchange assignment completed by committee members; a discussion of facilities needs, including deferred maintenance priorities around the district; and an overview of potential technology needs that could be addressed by the bond.
    - Superintendent of Schools Dr. Lupita Hinojosa also gave a brief welcome to attendees, thanking them for their ongoing commitment and input into the steering committee's work. "We truly appreciate you coming," Hinojosa said. "As our Bond Steering Committee, your thoughts are so very important for us as we plan for the district's future." She also introduced Dekaney High School Principal Alonzo Reynolds III and thanked him for hosting the evening's meeting at the campus.
    - Spring ISD Board of Trustees President Justine Durant greeted attendees, thanking them for their time and for representing their community in the steering committee process. "We have so many amazing people here," Durant said. "I'm just really excited about the power, and the history, and the experience of the individuals that are here. You've been in this community for so many years, and you understand what's needed." She also reminded them of their role as representatives to their communities and neighborhoods, and their ability to help educate the public about the bond process and its potential to support the needs of Spring ISD schools and students.
    - Durant also introduced fellow board members Winford Adams Jr. and Dr. Deborah Jensen, also in attendance at the meeting.

- ○ Mr. Miranda reviewed the upcoming schedule of committee meetings, including the upcoming June 28 meeting, where discussion will pivot to prioritizing the many needs around the district and assessing how the potential bond might best meet those needs. "We're going to have to make some very difficult decisions," Miranda said, noting that the results of the committee's work would then be presented to the Board of Trustees during the Aug. 4 board work session.
  - ○ MIranda reminded the group about the meeting norms, designed to ensure productive and informative meeting sessions, and told committee members about select individuals who had voluntarily stepped down from the steering committee due to potential conflicts of interest.

- ● Dekaney Ninth Grade Center Campus Tour
  - ○ Mr. Miranda invited committee members to participate in one of four guided tour opportunities, including the following:
    - ■ Science Labs (Dekaney 9th Grade Center)
    - ■ CTE/Athletics spaces (Dekaney 9th Grade Center)
    - ■ Classrooms (Dekaney 9th Grade Center)
    - ■ Performing and Visual Arts facilities (Dekaney High School main campus)
  - ○ Afterward, members of each tour group reported back briefly to the committee on what they had seen.
  - ○ Common themes included the noticeable contrast between the newer facilities at Dekaney and the ones viewed earlier in the week when the committee met at Spring High School, where aging infrastructure, outdated classrooms and other facilities issues were interfering with teaching and learning activities.
  - ○ Unlike at Spring High School, the learning spaces at Dekaney were described as safer, with better layout and adjacencies, sufficient storage and plenty of space for students and student movement, and up-to-date technology to support 21st century teaching and learning needs.

- ● July 19 Meeting Recap – Facilities
  - ○ Mr. Miranda gave a high-level review of the group's July 19 meeting, during which topics related to Facilities were the focus.
  - ○ Miranda also recapped discussion from the previous meeting about why bonds often constitute an important part of funding for capital needs in school districts across the country. He reminded committee members that, while school facilities have a direct impact on student learning, student and staff health, school finances, and other crucial factors relevant to education, nevertheless many school facilities – both in Texas and across the country – fall short of the ideal of providing well-equipped, safe and secure 21st century learning environments where students can successfully pursue their education.
  - ○ According to a nationwide 2021 State of Our Schools report, school facilities across the U.S. are "chronically underfunded," leaving districts and communities in the position of regularly having to weigh priorities and do the best they can with the funding resources that are available.

- ○ Miranda reminded the group of the fact that PreK-12 schools and facilities constitute the second-largest infrastructure capital expense nationally behind highways, but that, unlike transportation infrastructure that benefits from significant federal and state funding, capital funding for school construction falls mostly on the shoulders of local communities.
  - ○ These factors help explain the necessity for districts to periodically propose bond measures to their communities for voter consideration, in order to ensure ongoing funding for needed capital projects within the district.
  - ○ "We are here to make difficult decisions," Miranda told the committee members, thanking them again for their insight and commitment to the process.

- ● Thought Exchange Results
  - ○ Following the overview recap of the previous meeting, Mr. Miranda moved on to discuss an online thought exchange activity conducted after the July 19 meeting, including the results of that exercise.
  - ○ The main theme of the thought exchange activity was:
    - ■ "After Tuesday's discussions, which Capital Funding projects are you excited about, and why? What specific technology needs do you think need to be addressed as part of this potential bond, and why?"
  - ○ The activity had 27 participants responding, with 24 open-ended responses, and 270 "ratings," where, after completing their own initial responses, participants provided additional feedback on the submissions of others. Ratings help determine which themes and ideas resonate with the greatest number of respondents.
  - ○ Some of the top potential Spring ISD Capital Funding projects identified through the thought exchange activity included:
    - ■ Replacement of Spring High School (identified as a "top-3" priority by 93% of respondents)
    - ■ New Districtwide Education and Performance Center for Academics, Arts, Athletics, Emergency Reunification, etc. (identified as a "top-3" priority by 68% of respondents)
    - ■ Replacement of Jenkins Elementary School (identified as a "top-3" priority by 48% of respondents)
    - ■ Replacement of Westfield High School (identified as a "top-3" priority by 36% of respondents)
    - ■ Replacement of Reynolds Elementary School (identified as a "top-3" priority by 32% of respondents)
    - ■ Improvements to new Spring Leadership Academy campus at the former Clark Primary School facility (identified as a "top-3" priority by 28% of respondents)
  - ○ In addition, some of the potential technology-related needs for Spring ISD identified through the thought exchange activity included:
    - ■ Network infrastructure and connectivity (identified as a "top-3" priority by 79% of respondents)

- - End-User devices for students, teachers and staff (identified as a "top-3" priority by 79% of respondents)
    - Classroom Technology (identified as a "top-3" priority by 62% of respondents)
    - Cyber-Security (identified as a "top-3" priority by 54% of respondents)
  - In discussing highly rated comments and suggestions that resonated with many committee members, Miranda noted that all of the top-rated open-ended responses dealt with replacing the Spring High School campus. Respondents gave a variety of reasons related to:
    - Building has outlasted its life-cycle.
    - Students and staff at the campus deserve better.
    - Several safety and security concerns could be addressed through a new Spring High School campus.
    - Repairs and additions made over the years have not managed to keep the school up to current standards.
  - Highly rated comments related to Technology emphasized the importance of up-to-date technology for students and teachers, the importance of strong technology infrastructure to address ongoing cyber-security needs, and the need to keep up with trends in educational technology and technology security.
  - Miranda thanked everyone who participated in the online thought exchange activity, noting that responses came from a broad cross-section of the committee representing a range of stakeholders across the district.

- Facility Needs Assessment
  - Mr. Miranda introduced a presentation on facilities needs, especially related to deferred maintenance needs throughout the district.
  - Miranda explained that, even with carefully planned maintenance schedules and skilled maintenance teams working throughout the district all year long, deferred maintenance is a reality affecting any facility over the course of its life-cycle.
  - "Most of the time, the maintenance needs outstrip the funding and the ability for us to be able to get to all of the things that are there," Miranda told the committee, "both from a personnel standpoint and from a capital resources standpoint, so those items have to be deferred," often until a bond makes possible the necessary influx of capital funding.
  - Miranda introduced the committee to General Manager of Operations Gary Hutton.
  - Miranda explained that Hutton, who joined the district in 2017, brings a wealth of experience in architecture and educational design. In addition to his experience in Houston with SHW Group Architects and his work on staff with Tomball and Humble ISDs, Hutton currently serves as President of the Southern Region Board of the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE), the largest association in the world dedicated to improving learning through facilities design.
  - Hutton also served on the committee that wrote the current Texas Education Agency Facility Standards, chairing a subcommittee on Inclusion.

- Mr. Hutton provided bond steering committee members with a brief overview of the district's facilities and maintenance operations, noting that the department includes 57 employees when fully staffed.
- Hutton explained that the maintenance department is currently responsible for 6,875,682 square feet in 63 different buildings with an average age of approximately 28 years.
- "The painting crew, if they painted 5 buildings a year," Hutton said, "it would take them 12 years to paint the whole district."
- Hutton also mentioned the 2-member Energy Management team. Together, the Energy Management and Maintenance Team manage over 100 chillers to cool Spring ISD buildings to help keep students focused on learning.
- Hutton covered several additional themes and facts related to deferred maintenance, including the fact that many roofs across the district have been in place through multiple hurricanes and tropical storms, and the fact that there are doors at district campuses that are opened and closed over 180,000 times each year.
- These kinds of factors, along with others, Hutton explained, lead over time to the need to address deferred maintenance issues.
- Mr. Miranda then talked about the detailed process of quantifying deferred maintenance needs across Spring ISD.
- This year, the district is in the process of having a full Facility Needs Assessment conducted by AUTOARCH Architects, which MIranda explained will help steer both day-to-day maintenance operations over the next few years, and also provide the district with valuable information about where bond funds can have the greatest overall impact
- With more than 30 years of experience in school architecture, AUTOARCH has also worked with other Texas school districts, such as Houston ISD, as well as colleges and municipalities.
- Miranda explained that the Facility Needs Assessment was a months-long, in-depth process, including onsite reviews, input from maintenance and facilities staff members, and interviews with campus principals to better understand the issues at each campus.
- AUTOARCH is now in the process of calibrating data from the assessment, with draft reports expected before the end of July and a final report expected in August, including prioritization of needs throughout the district.
- Miranda explained that the assessment process will also result in an in-depth database with dashboards for each facility that will support the district in managing ongoing and special maintenance projects and needs.
- The assessment is already yielding useful information, Miranda told committee members, including estimated costs of high-priority deferred maintenance categories across the district:
    - Roofing: $48 Million
    - Painting: $6.5 Million
    - Flooring: $15 Million

- - ■ HVAC: $40 Million
    - ■ Rebranding/School Updates: $2.5 MIllion
  - ○ The final category in the list above, Miranda explained, was specially created to help support exciting innovations and developments in Spring ISD, including the evolution of the district's specialty programs and schools of choice.
  - ○ "We know that we have decisions to make pretty soon," Miranda said, "because we know that most bond programs have a deferred maintenance bucket that they allocate for these types of repairs that have to happen."
  - ○ Before moving on to the next agenda item, Miranda invited committee members to talk at their tables about the deferred maintenance presentation and any reflections they would like the group to be able to consider going forward. Notes from the small-group discussions were collected for later review.

- ● Technology
  - ○ In transitioning to the Technology presentation, Mr. Miranda introduced the committee members to Jeff Kohrman, the district's technology officer, who brings over 40 years of technology experience and 25 years of leadership experience to his current role in Spring ISD, where he has been for the past seven years.
  - ○ Miranda explained that Kohrman has experience in both corporate and education environments, has been a member of the RTM Advisory Board for the past five years, and has helped procure more than $20 million in technology grants for the district.
  - ○ Mr. Kohrman explained to the committee members that the Technology department consists of 57 employees supporting more than 50 schools and administration buildings throughout Spring ISD. The group maintains two data centers, more than 200 virtual servers and more than 900 network switches, as well as both cloud and on-site backups of all district data.
  - ○ Kohrman explained that, since the start of the pandemic, the district has gone to a 1:1 Student-to-Chromebook ratio, while the department also manages close to 5,000 non-Chromebook student devices and more than 4,400 teacher/staff devices.
  - ○ In addition to device management and maintenance, the Technology department maintains a dedicated Student Service Desk and supports more than 42,000 Technology Support Tickets annually.
  - ○ In response to a question about funds obtained through the federal E-Rate Program, Kohrman indicated that the program had helped support some technology purchases made during the pandemic, especially for products related to network and server connectivity.
  - ○ One theme discussed by Kohrman during his overview was cybersecurity, which he explained is an increasingly important piece of the technology landscape. For context, Kohrman said that the district currently experiences on the order of:
    - ■ 48,000 daily cyber-attacks on its technology environment, including:
      - ● Distributed Denial Of Service (DDOS) Attacks
      - ● Email Phishing

- - "Drive-by" Attacks
    - 1.4 million cyber-attacks blocked monthly by Technology
  - The number of cyber-attacks has risen dramatically in recent years across all industries and sectors, Kohrman said, and the Spring ISD Technology Department has to be constantly evolving and improving to keep district systems and data safe, including the personal data of students and staff members.
  - In addition to semi-annual Vulnerability and Penetration Testing on the district's networks, Spring ISD has also implemented artificial intelligence to detect attacks, and has instituted year-round cybersecurity training to ensure that users of the system remain vigilant and careful regarding any and all cyber-threats.
  - Kohrman explained that cybersecurity training for staff has helped lower failure rates in simulated phishing attacks from approximately 60% to approximately 12%.
  - "That's great progress, but we can't stop," Kohrman said, noting that even a single effective cyber-attack could potentially compromise district technology systems and protected data.
  - Kohrman also discussed the life-cycles associated with various technology elements, including the following examples:
    - Servers: 5-7 years
    - Network Equipment: 5-7 years
    - Chromebooks: 7 years
    - Desktop/Laptop Computers: 5-6 years
    - Classroom A/V: 10 years (incl. Laser Projectors)
    - Printers: 6-8 years
  - Kohrman also discussed a range of potential technology needs that could be part of a potential bond, including the following examples:
    - Instructional Technology
      - Interactive Displays
      - Document Cameras
      - Teacher Laptop Replacements (Replace end-of-life equipment)
      - Chromebook Charging Stations
      - Computer Lab Upgrades
      - Remote Teacher Set-ups (for Master Teacher Remote Teaching)
      - Classroom Audio Systems (Microphones and Speakers)
      - A/V Updates to Teaching Theaters
    - Technology Infrastructure
      - Converged Server Infrastructure (Replace end-of-life equipment)
      - Network Fabric Technology (Increased security and manageability)
      - Campus Uninterruptible Power Supplies (Replace end-of-life equipment)
      - Enhanced Cybersecurity (Additional products to strengthen security footprint)

- - - Upgrade to Enterprise Backup Solution (Replace end-of-life equipment)
      - Update the existing telephone system to help it meet current standards for ingoing/outgoing call capacity
      - Enterprise Wireless System (Replace end-of-life equipment)
      - Network Switch Equipment (Replace end-of-life equipment)
    - In response to a question about equity in bond funding, Kohrman assured committee members that the list of potential technology projects would have across-the-board impacts at all campuses.
    - Another question prompted a brief discussion of the district's carefully managed device replacement cycle, which controls annual technology-related costs while helping ensure up-to-date equipment.
    - A committee member commented on the usefulness of touchscreen and stylus-enabled devices for classroom instruction. Kohrman replied that current purchasing standards include touchscreens on all new devices.
    - A question came up regarding mobile service on campuses, including dead spots on campuses that can affect cell phones. Mr. Miranda said that there was a provision under the potential safety and security measures to improve connection and service for both police radios and mobile phones.
    - Before finishing the meeting, Miranda invited committee members to talk at their tables about the technology presentation and any reflections they would like the group to be able to consider going forward. Notes from the small-group discussions were collected for later review.

- Closing
  - The meeting concluded with a Mentimeter text-message-based poll, in which attendees answered the question "How are you feeling after tonight's presentation?"
  - Responses from the group included the following, among others:
    - Excited
    - Good
    - Informed
    - Interested
    - Not made of money
    - Optimistic
    - Nervous
    - Overwhelming
    - Encouraged
    - Buckets
  - A question was raised about whether there were rules governing how often districts could propose bond measures. Chief Financial Officer Ann Westbrooks said that, while there are no specific rules, the norm or rule-of-thumb tends to be approximately five years between bonds, in part due to the time it takes to implement and execute projects from the previous bond program.

- ○ Ms. Westbrooks reminded committee members about the upcoming meeting on July 28, where the committee will begin the process of prioritizing needs and narrowing the scope of the potential bond measure.
- ○ "That's where the rubber meets the road, next week," Westbrooks said.
- ○ Dr. Hinojosa thanked the group again for attending, for their patience with the process, and for all their hard work as members of the bond steering committee.
- ○ The meeting ended at 8:05 p.m.