

Board Meeting of
May 25, 2016

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Randall Booker, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **Steering Committee Recommendation to Seek Voter Approval of a \$65 Million Bond Measure**

I. Support Information

Piedmont Unified's Facilities Steering Committee has been meeting regularly to review the District's educational goals and Facilities Master Plan, consider various concept designs and preliminary budgets, and develop recommendations concerning implementation of this Plan. The Committee unanimously recommends that the Board of Education seek voter approval of \$65 million in bonds at the November 2016 general election, to allow the District to address some of the most critical educational objectives and building deficiencies identified in the Facilities Master Plan.

The Steering Committee's recommendations are discussed in its attached memorandum. Members of the Committee will attend the Board of Education meeting on May 25 to answer any questions you may have about these recommendations.

Background

In 2015 and 2016, Piedmont Unified assessed whether its facilities support changing educational programs and goals. The resulting [Facilities Master Plan](#) combines (1) the assessment of the educational appropriateness of facilities with (2) the assessment of the physical condition of facilities and (3) teacher and community input, and identifies a range of improvements needed to support our educational programs now and in the future. (For more information about the Plan, see these [Answers to Frequently Asked Questions](#).)

The Role of the Steering Committee

The Facilities Steering Committee plays a significant role in bringing community viewpoints and professional expertise into the management and oversight of the District's capital projects. The Committee, which has changed in composition over time, now consists of: Grier Graff; Brad Hebert; Robert Hendrickson; John Gibbs; Sally Aldridge; Angel Fierro; and Bernard Pech. District staff who serve on the Committee include: Superintendent Randall Booker; Assistant Superintendent Song Chin-Bendib; Director of Facilities Pete Palmer; and Board of Education Members Rick Raushenbush and Doug Ireland. This group represents a diversity of viewpoints about how best to implement the Facilities Master Plan.

Starting in January 2016, the Steering Committee's mandate has been to: study the Facilities Master Plan; help develop various options to prioritize and phase the work in anticipation of one or more facilities bond measures; scrutinize detailed cost estimates developed by District staff in conjunction with general contractors specializing in school construction; and develop recommendations for the Board of Education. The Committee was guided by considerations of how to accomplish the most pressing educational goals and how to get the best value for the investment of bond funds.

II. Summary of Steering Committee Findings and Recommendations

The Committee agrees with the goals set forth in the Educational Specifications, accepts the evaluation of the District's current facilities in the Facilities Assessment, and believes that, to continue to provide an excellent education for Piedmont children, the District should begin to address the significant needs identified in the Facilities Master Plan.

The Committee determined:

- ❑ The District cannot complete all of the work identified in the Plan at one time because the estimated cost exceeds the District's current bonding capacity.

- ❑ The District will have to prioritize the work and seek voter approval to make these improvements in phases.
- ❑ In addition to cost constraints, other constraints on implementation include challenging site topography and limited real estate for the middle and high schools.

The Committee recommends:

- ❑ The Board of Education should seek voter approval to issue school bonds at its available bonding capacity -- roughly \$65 million – to address the educational needs identified in the Facilities Master Plan.
- ❑ Recognizing that it is not possible to address all of the needs identified in the Facilities Master Plan within the current bonding capacity, Piedmont High School campus should be the primary focus because the PHS buildings are the oldest in the District with the most severe physical needs, because PHS serves all Piedmont students in their highest level of education in the District, and because supporting high school STEAM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) is a paramount educational goal.
- ❑ Investment in new classrooms at the elementary schools to support extended-day kindergarten is also a high priority.
- ❑ The Board of Education should not seek to “do the minimum” by repairing or replacing failing systems only. The Committee determined that it would not be a good value to invest in a building if the building is nearing the end of its useful life and the improvements will not extend its useful life.
- ❑ The Board of Education should propose this bond measure for the November 2016 election.

To make these recommendations, the Committee studied a range of conceptual designs and preliminary cost estimates to assess how the most pressing

educational goals may be accomplished while obtaining the greatest value for the investment.

The Committee is not recommending a specific design concept. If the bond is approved by voters, more public input would be needed to determine the scope and sequence of projects, assess the educational benefits and trade-offs of the various options, identify additional options, and determine the best solutions. In addition to the design, there would be community engagement concerning bond program priorities, allocation of bond funds, and staging of construction, among other issues.

III. Recommendation: Action

Review the recommendation of the Steering Committee and propose a bond measure for \$65 million -- the full amount of the District's bonding capacity -- to begin to implement the most critical educational goals of the Facilities Master Plan.