



BOARD BRIEFS

Avoca School District 37

Dr. Kevin Jauch, Superintendent
2921 Illinois Road, Willmette, IL 60091
847-251-3587 ♦ avoca37.org

Avoca Center Update

At this time, the Board has not made a decision on the future of Avoca Center, but through the months of February to April, it has continued to consider various options and receive feedback from its constituents. The administration has sought potential partnerships and possible land lease opportunities with a few outside entities. The Avoca Board greatly appreciates the feedback it has received from the community. It is a priority, that in the event the Board decides to retain the land, that the Avoca Center building must be razed. Superintendent, Kevin Jauch, has been in discussion with various organizations regarding potential partnerships for use of the land, which include negotiating an agreement regarding the expense of razing the building. Please check the Avoca Board website to read regular updates regarding Avoca Center in the Board meeting minutes.

Working Cash Bond Issuance

Avoca held a Bond Issuance Notification Act (BINA) Hearing Concerning the Intent to issue \$7,600,000 Working Cash Fund Bonds on February 22, 2018. The 30-Day petition period terminated on March 5, 2018. The Board approved the Parameters and Escrow Resolutions at the March Board of Education meeting. The Board decided to sell a taxable portion of bonds to mitigate risk associated with expenditures and future transactions. The Bond sale was held on April 11, 2018. The final True Interest Cost (TIC) for the 2018A Bonds was 3.266%, which was consistent with the estimated TIC. The 2018A non-taxable working cash proceeds are \$7,067,992 and were awarded to Robert Baird. The final TIC for the 2018B Bonds is 2.957%, which was lower than the estimated TIC. The 2018B taxable working cash proceeds are \$252,982 and were awarded to BOK Financial Securities, Inc. The debt service structure will remain the same as the 2015 bond issuance with an annual payment of approximately \$730,000 for the next 18 years.

Communication Committee Report

The Communication Committee updated the BOE regarding the district's ongoing strategy for communication and engagement. A key aspect of that discussion revolved around whether or not Avoca is reaching community members without children in the district. The committee is considering the development of new strategies and reinstating former practices to reach this demographic in the community. Ideas include collecting analytics from website traffic, surveying the community via a link provided in the Board Brief, providing an "opt in" option with each edition of the Vision or Board Briefs (see page 3 of this document), sending a postcard to the community regarding the launch of the new website, checking in with parents and teachers regarding communication between conferences and reinstating some a community engagement event during American Education Week.

Strategic Plan Update

Through the months of February to April, the administration reported much progress regarding the current strategic plan. This brief includes overviews of larger pieces of the work toward the strategic plan; however, some additional highlights from the monthly reports are as follows:

The Multi-Tiered System for Support (MTSS) committee has developed a comprehensive intervention manual that outlines the current practices at Avoca and continues to look into potential new interventions to bolster student learning at all levels.

As the 2017-2018 school year winds down, staff will soon be developing continuous improvement goals for cohorts of students, reflecting on goals for this year and setting new goals for the upcoming year. The Administration and staff will be reflecting and reviewing the use of time, space, and personnel to make adjustments to optimize each resource. Dr. Jauch noted that the financial aspect of this review will be tied into the bond issuance and facilities plan.

The district is working with the Avoca Education Association to proctor a staff satisfaction survey addressing Goal 2 of the strategic plan.

The district has completed an updated Life Safety and Facilities Plan and secured funding through the bond sale to move forward with the plan. A 5-year financial projection has been updated and the Board will be reviewing the financial reality of the district to seek opportunities to reduce expenditures and increase revenues.

English Language Arts Curriculum Update

An ELA committee has been formed and is currently operating in *ad hoc* subcommittees focusing on the areas of ELA Foundations, ELA in Literature, ELA in Informational Text, Vocabulary and Writing. The ELA committee has approved their underlying beliefs for the ELA program at Avoca, which include: fostering a love for reading and writing; encompassing the components of ELA across all content areas and ensuring cohesion within and across grade levels and content areas; cultivating student independence; providing sufficient instructional time; and establishing systems that support continuous improvement. The Goals of the ELA program are still fluid at this point, but focus on alignment of curriculum, assessment, instruction, terminology and resources. In order to achieve Goal 1.a.2, the ELA committee will define and determine the needs for Avoca's Balanced Literacy System (BLS) and the articulation of what that will look like for each subcommittee topic in Fall-Winter of 2018. The Winter-Spring of 2019 will focus on finding resources that support the objectives of the BLS.

Math Curriculum Update

This winter, the district administered a survey to the K-5 instructional staff asking them to rate their progress with the new math curriculum implementation in order for the C&I Coordinator to target the teachers' needs. This survey collected information regarding the instructor's standards-



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based resources and practices, data-driven approach and differentiation. Overall, the staff is still grappling with learning the new system and building the program while teaching it; however, they are achieving the anticipated results for student learning. Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator, Jennie Winters, will present another update after a full year of implementation.

Technology and Innovation: Research and Device Update

The Research and Device (R&D) Team surveyed teachers on their use of technology in the classroom, assessed the current realities and made a commitment to reduce the cost of student devices. The R&D Team prepared a cost analysis of potential technology devices used in education and presented recommendations for a student refresh plan and staff refresh.

The R&D Team presented their recommendation for the student device refresh at the March Board of Education meeting. The recommendation includes piloting iPads in 7th grade for the 2018-2019 school year. This will render a significant cost savings for the devices, licensing and accessories for student refresh. The R&D Team estimates the cost for 2018-2019 will be \$38,395 as opposed to the typical annual student refresh expenditure, which is closer to \$100,000. There is a plan in place for professional development for the pilot. If the 7th grade pilot is successful, the District will consider the continuation of refreshing student devices with iPads instead of MacBook Airs, as they have done previously. The district plans to use the former student devices to supplement classrooms as needed.

The R&D Team recommended to the district the purchase of 84 MacBook Airs to replace the staff's 5-yr old, mechanical drive computers, along with 5 additional technology administrator devices for a total cost of \$97,938. Instructional staff devices are updated every five years and are an expense factored into the district budget. However, the Board has taken this refresh under review and has asked the administration to share other options as well.

The R&D Team also proposed a 1:1 device plan for 2nd grade. The recommendation includes the purchase of 100 iPads for a total cost of \$32,399. This proposal stems from trial use of 5 iPad minis per classroom during the 2017-2018 school year. The R&D Team believes the 1:1 technology will increase the ability to provide differentiated learning and improve 21st century learning skills among the students. The BOE is still deliberating on this recommendation at this time.

Technology and Innovation Leading Team (TILT) and Professional Development Update

TILT has been working during 2017-2018 on several goals to enhance curriculum with the integration of innovative technology. TILT specifically is working to develop a technology Professional Development University (PDU) based on the requests and interests of faculty. The PDU will focus on learning outcomes for students rather than the specific device or technology used. This PDU will also

provide a ground-up basis for use of technology that will allow for more targeted and effective use of time for site visits and external professional development. TILT plans to develop a system for piloting and implementing new technologies, ideas and instructional practices. As TILT has been working through the steps of the process for developing the PDU, a goal to create a technology scope and sequence for students has emerged. Ms. Lane believes that circling TILT goals toward student learning will naturally inspire teachers to embrace the concepts.

Food Service Update

Avoca began using Quest Food Management Services, Inc. to provide lunch and other district food services at the beginning of the school year. Quest reported the following successes: 4.5% growth in sales; the involvement of the district employees has been eliminated; new equipment has allowed for attractive options and increased sales; homemade and fresh foods are available and nutrition education has been offered. A food service survey was sent to parents and staff. 76% of parent respondents and 96% of staff respondents were satisfied or highly satisfied with the program. The largest challenge the food service program implementation has encountered is staying within budget for food, labor and direct costs. Quest provided an explanation for each variance and explained the action being taken to correct the losses and the impact they have had to date. While the first months of the school year showed a large financial loss, partly due to start up costs of the new program, the months of January and February already show a positive trend. Due to the imbalance this far, Quest will refund half of their management fee as a gesture to remedy the deficit, in part. Going forward, Quest has offered two options to help mitigate the risk and demonstrate commitment to Avoca. The first option is a tiered management fee structure that would be based on the program's performance. The second option is to shift to a different financial structure where Quest assumes full risk/responsibility of financial performance of the operation. The Finance Committee will engage in further discussion regarding these options once more data has been collected and will provide a recommendation to the Board in May.

Emergency Procedure Update

District administration gave the Board an overview of Avoca's current emergency procedures. Avoca takes safety, security and the preparation of staff and students for emergency situations very seriously. Local law enforcement and emergency responders are heavily involved with the procedures Avoca adheres to and have reciprocal communication regarding changes to practice and procedure. Some Marie Murphy School emergency procedures vary from those at Avoca West due to the age and emotional maturity of the students, but all are developmentally appropriate.



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Summer Facilities Projects Update

For summer 2018, DLA, Architects, Ltd. will oversee the 2018 Summer Projects for Marie Murphy and Avoca West Elementary Schools. Construction projects at Avoca West include architectural finish work related to asbestos abatement in the kitchen, and classrooms 46 and 48, replacement of flooring and wall base in Room 26, replacement of casework and sinks in classrooms 46, 48, and 26 and the replacement of select exhaust fans. At Marie Murphy, projects include architectural finish work related to asbestos abatement in the stairwells, gymnasium storage spaces, and upper weight room, including new flooring and wall base as well as the replacement of select exhaust fans.

Orchestra and Band Programs

The Board reviewed the structure and staffing of the current Orchestra and Band Programs at Avoca. The administration recommended maintaining the current program, due to the popularity, value and benefit to the students. The Board agreed that due to the challenging logistics of the band program, it would be best to continue to provide this opportunity while it is still feasible in partnership with Sunset Ridge School District 29 and Wilmette School District 39, but to include parents in the discussion for potential modifications. The BOE will continue to assess the program's impact and value to the district. The Board agreed to continue to staff these activities at 2.6 FTE for the Orchestra program and 0.2 FTE for the Band program, which reflects current staffing levels.

ACTION ITEMS

2018-2019 Student Instructional, Technology and Transportation Fees

Fees were approved at the February Board meeting as follows:

Instructional Fees

- K - \$ 150 (Includes \$25 yearbook)
- 1-4 - \$ 175 (Includes \$25 yearbook & \$25 extracurricular fee)
- 5-8 - \$ 190 (Includes \$25 yearbook & \$25 extracurricular fee)
- \$25 discount per child if paid by 9/15/18)

A credit card service fee will be applied if paid online.

Technology Fees

- 1 Child - \$ 175
- 2 Children - \$ 225
- 3 Children - \$ 275
- 4 or more Children - \$ 325
- \$25 discount per family if paid by 9/15/18

A credit card service fee will be applied if paid online.

Transportation Fees

Both Ways		One Way	
1st Child	\$ 575	1st Child	\$ 325
Each additional child	\$ 450	Each additional child	\$ 250

\$75 Discount per family if paid by 6/30/2018

Field Trip- \$3.00 per person when collecting admission fee
 A credit card service fee will be applied if paid online.

2018-2019 Staffing Plan

The Board approved the staffing plan for the 2018-2019 school year with notable changes due to current student enrollment and its impact on staffing. FTE for English Language instruction has been reduced to 4.5 FTE. Also, due to current projected enrollment numbers for first grade and kindergarten, administration requested three sections in both grade levels. The Board agreed to adjust this number, if necessary, based on the needs of the cohort of children rather than a specific student enrollment number. Due to these reductions, it was necessary for the district to honorably reduce the teaching staff at Avoca West by 1.5 FTE.

Summer Professional Activity Hours

The Board approved 875 summer professional activity hours, which allows instructional staff to continue to work on strategic projects, training and instructional practices through the summer. 875 hours reflect a reduction in hours offered compared to previous summers.

One Hope United Lease Extension Request

Avoca Center Tenant, One Hope United requested an extension to their current lease to May 31, 2018. At the termination of the extension, One Hope United will move to their new Wilmette location.

Amended School Year Calendar to Reflect Emergency Closure Day

The BOE amended the school year calendar to account for the emergency closure on February 9, 2018. The last day of student attendance will now be Thursday, June 14, 2018.

One Hope United Facility Use Agreement Extension for Before and After Childcare Program at Avoca West

One Hope United has extended their Facilities Use Agreement for the before and after school childcare program at Avoca West until June 2023.

Summer Facilities Project Bids

The Board approved the following bids for the summer 2018 facilities projects: Construction projects bid went to Midwest Services & Development, who was the lowest responsible bidder at \$324,000. For asbestos abatement at Avoca West, the lowest responsible bid was received from MKA Environmental will design, manage and perform air sampling for the project for a fee of \$7,760. Asbestos abatement at Avoca West will be done by Hepa, Inc. for \$26,300. The lowest responsible bid for asbestos abatement at Marie Murphy was Valor Technologies, Inc. at \$19,475.

Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2018-2019

The Board approved their meeting schedule for the 2018-2019 school year. You can find the schedule in its entirety on the Board of Education meetings page.



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Bond Issuance/Triple AAA Rating

At the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, the Avoca Board of Education began the process of reviewing the district’s current facilities’ needs. It became apparent, that in order to maintain and improve on the current level of instructional integrity and provide a safe and comfortable learning environment, the district would need to seek additional funding to support the facility projects. Items of highest priority include asbestos abatement, carpet and cabinetry replacement, pipe replacement, bathroom renovations, upgrades in exterior lighting, fire safety devices and technology infrastructure. Also both the heating system and parking lot restoration are high priorities at Marie Murphy. At Avoca West, the last three remaining univents from the 1991 addition will be replaced. After the prioritization of the projects were established and approved, district administration set out to secure funding through a working cash bond issuance. Chief School Business Official, Beth Dever, worked alongside PMA Securities, Inc. to set the parameters, escrow and preliminary official statement of the sale. Ms. Dever also participated in a financial Standard and Poors rating call and a due diligence call. In part to the strong financial history of the district and the administration’s and Board’s commitment to maintaining fiscal integrity, Avoca was able to maintain its AAA rating from Standard and Poors. The bond sale took place on April 11, 2018, yielding a total of \$7,302,974 in bond proceeds. The district has structured the bond payback at the same level as the current debt service, extending the payments approximately 18 years but keeping the bond and interest levy the same for taxpayers.



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GET ENGAGED!

Upcoming Board of Education meetings

June 4, 2018

5:30 p.m.- COTW Meeting

June 21, 2018

5:15 p.m.- Public Hearing on Amended

FY 18 Budget

5:30 p.m.- Regular BOE Meeting

July 26, 2018

5:30 p.m.- RegularBOE Meeting

August 9, 2018

5:30 p.m. – COTW Meeting

August 23, 2018

5:30 p.m.- Regular BOE Meeting

GET ENGAGED!

Please take a moment to complete the Community Communication Survey at www.avoca37.org/survey! Your input is valuable to us.

Would you like to receive Avoca information via email? Let us know at clampitts@avoca37.org.