

ANSWERS FOR QUESTIONS

from the June 24 public meeting at Bennet

Question about Bennet school: Will the house to the south need to move?

Only if needed to expand parking.

What will be done with the existing Pre-K building?

The board has discussed using the building for after-school programs, or leasing it to a day care provider. The house also could be sold and moved. Many options are available, but no decision has been made.

Question about Bennet school: Does the cost range reflect the option of including mechanical (HVAC) improvements in this project vs. a separate contract?

The cost range discussed includes several factors for consideration. The amount of deferred maintenance work, including HVAC improvements, on the facility that is undertaken as part of a potential bond issue is a factor.

Question about Option C: Can you access the new gym from the other gym?

Yes, the new gym would be accessible from other existing gym

Question about Option C gym: Why is the seating on the north side, but the entrance is on the south side?

Option C has exterior entry locations on the South and West. Access could be achieved from the East and North through the existing building. During layout, the stage and fly loft elements that are included with the gym seem to make more sense along an exterior wall rather than interior to the building.

What is the cost difference between each option for Palmyra?

The design team has prepared more cost information. These cost options will be reviewed in further detail at Community Meeting #2, which will be held on July 16.

Can you give more information about the new stage area?

More information and clearer graphics will be provided at the Community Meeting #2. However, please keep in mind that at this stage of planning, documents are schematic in nature. While these plans provide enough information for budgeting, they do not provide detail regarding all the elements of design. Detailed design will not begin until after a bond issue is passed.

Does the cost range for Palmyra, similar to the Bennet plan, include aspects of the building that need to be improved in either case, whether the bond passes or not?

Yes. The cost range provided so far for each project includes systems upgrades that will need to be done, whether or not the school is renovated and expanded.

What happens to school functions if you have to take the building down and complete renovations while school is in session?

To the best of the design team's ability, construction will be phased so that it does not interfere with the busiest times of the school year. Some construction can take place over the summer, as well as during breaks in the academic calendar such as Spring Break. The design team has worked on numerous K-12 and collegiate renovation and expansion projects for buildings that remained open and operational during construction.

Do we really need two gyms?

Currently, some practices must be held very early in the morning or later after school because the gym is already occupied by another team or age group. In addition, some activities (such as wrestling) are held at Bennet Elementary due to lack of practice space. Having two gyms would provide more opportunity for more students to practice sports directly before or after school. The second gym also can be utilized by the fine arts department, other school group activities, and for community events.

Are you basing your percentages on the pie charts on dollars spent as well as square footage?

Yes. The estimates are based on a cost per square foot. We assigned the square footage associated with each specific type of use (Academics, Art, Athletics, Commons/Community, and Other) and analyzed the data to create the pie charts shown at Community Meeting #1.

If you remove the gym, and if you remove the 3rd location (for athletic fields/track), what would be the percentage of total cost that would be reduced?

Perhaps 15-18%, depending on the final total cost established by selection of the preferred option.

What is the grade at the newly purchased site?

Most of the site is fairly level. The north side has grade, but is amenable to creating a ballfield with berms.

In the graphics you provided, how many parking spaces are shown on the new site?

Approximately 225 spaces.

What is the historic enrollment at Bennet?

Since the addition of the Pre-School, Bennet enrollment has increased steadily. In 2007-08 it was 241, 2008-09 it was 225, in 2009-10 it was 238, in 2010-11 it was 242, in 2011-12 it was 253, in 2012-13 it was 253, in 2013-14 it was 274, and in 2014-15 it is projected to be 301.

Can you explain funding/expenditures/state aid?

District OR-1 utilizes several distinct funds to operate the school. They include

- the **GENERAL FUND**, which finances all facets of services rendered by the school district, is maintained by all operating school districts in the state. General Fund expenditures are limited by statute and the tax levy for this fund is restricted;
- the **DEPRECIATION FUND**, which is used to spread replacement costs over a period of years in order to avoid a disproportionate tax effort in a single year to meet such an expense. This fund is restricted by statute as part of the Allowable Reserve limitation. The Depreciation Fund is not specifically provided for in law; therefore, this fund shall be considered a component of the General Fund

- the **ACTIVITIES FUND**, which is required to account for the financial operations of quasi-independent student organizations, inter-school athletics, and other self-supporting or partially self-supporting school activities;
- the **LUNCH FUND**, which is required to accommodate the financial activities of all Nutrition Programs operated by the school district;
- the **BOND FUND**, which is used to record tax receipts, investment interest, and the payment of bond principal, interest, and other related costs (i.e. trustee fees). Proceeds from a bond issue shall be deposited into the Special Building Fund to be expended on the actual building project;
- the **BUILDING FUND**, which is utilized when a school board decides to acquire or improve sites and/or to erect, alter or improve buildings. The tax levy for this fund is restricted to \$0.14;
- the **STUDENT FEE FUND**, which is a separate school district fund not funded by tax revenue into which all money collected from students pursuant to the Public Elementary and Secondary Student Fee Authorization Act.
- the **EMPLOYEE BENEFIT FUND**, which may be established in order to specifically reserve General Fund money for the benefit of school district employees (unemployment compensation, early retirement, health insurance deductibles, etc.);
- the **QUALIFIED CAPITAL PUPRPOSE FUND**, which may be established for the removal of environmental hazards, the reduction or elimination of accessibility barriers in school district buildings, the repayment of a qualified zone academy bond issued for a qualified capital purpose, modifications for life safety code violations, indoor air quality projects, and mold abatement and prevention projects. General Fund expenditures for the purpose of this fund are not allowable. Qualified Zone Academy Bonds, Qualified School Construction Bonds, and Build America Bonds are included in the Qualified Capital Purpose Undertaking Fund. *(Note this is not currently in use at District OR-1.)*
- **STATE AID**, which is based on a “needs vs. resources” formula that determines a District’s level of aid. District OR-1’s state aid appropriation has decreased significantly in recent years. Examples of needs include adjustments for poverty, limited English proficiency, student growth, distance education, transportation, etc. Examples of resources include allocated income tax funds, teacher education aid, instruction time aid, yield from local effort rate, net option funding, etc.

Historically, receipt of state aid has been as follows: 2007-08 received \$603,756; 2008-09 received \$585,425; 2009-10 received \$715,921; 2010-11 received \$628,107; 2011-12 received \$766,936; 2012-13 received \$803,939; 2013-14 received \$595,939; 2014-15 received \$437,447.

What is the status of the property at 190th Street? What will happen to the proceeds if it is sold?

The property has been offered for sale for several months. Some buyers expressed interested, but no acceptable offers have been received as of this date, July 2014. The sale proceeds will be returned to the general fund

More detail is needed about state aid and levy

The Bond Fund shall be used to record tax receipts, investment interest, and the payment of bond principal, interest, and other related costs (i.e. trustee fees). Proceeds from a bond issue shall be deposited into the Special Building Fund to be expended on the actual building project. The bond is repaid entirely through property tax receipts.

State Aid is available for two years based on this formula: 1st year - District Basic Funding per formula student X (.20 X Estimated Student Capacity); 2nd year - District Basic Funding per formula student X (.10 X Estimated Student Capacity).

If we tear down the 1930s building (17,000 SF) how is the lost space replaced? Do we end up with less academic space?

The existing 1930's building houses approximately 5,960 square feet of educational space and 1,516 square feet of office / staff space. Of the 17,000 square feet 9,524 square feet is circulation and storage space (located on the upper floor level that is not handicap accessible). The Option C plan currently identifies that the majority of the 1930's educational space (SPED and Foreign Language) being relocated into existing classrooms spaces (Music, FCS, Math, AG) New space is being constructed for these functions located between the Gym spaces and along the East side of the existing IT area is 6,826 square feet, a net gain of approximately 900 SF.

Could classroom/academic space be built instead of a gym, where the 1930s building is now?

Yes. Academic space could be built instead of a gym. However, scheduling difficulties indicate that a second gym would be beneficial to the district and allow more favorable practice times for all teams, and additional improved spaces for activities such as Fine Arts, such as a stage and backstage area.

With the additions, will the high school be large enough to accommodate today's first grade/adjacent grades?

Yes, based on today's enrollment. Option C also is designed to accommodate a future addition if needed.

What will happen to District OR1 enrollment when they open new schools (i.e. Catholic school, LPS school)?

We cannot accurately predict how Lincoln's growth to the east will affect our enrollment. We are aware of the pressure to make sure our facilities and our learning opportunities are similar in quality to those of our peer schools.

What neighboring school district and in the conference and surrounding areas have passed bond issues? What have they done to improve their school facilities? These include Malcolm, Norris, Syracuse, Freeman, etc.

Freeman recently built a new gym and commons addition. We will continue to do research on the level of facilities, and impact on the tax levy, at neighboring districts. We feel this is important information to share at future Community Meetings.