

Item 10A: Business Services Report: Columbus Repurposing Update

Board of Education

Mon, Apr 28, 2025 6:00PM

Kay Eggert (Board President) 52:31

Moving to reports, first, business services. Mr. Hartjes.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 52:38

Thank you. So, Dr. Nan Bunnow and I have been working with several administrators who have submitted proposals for using space at Columbus. All are viable options, but they come with renovation needs. And renovation needs means two things, one is cost, and then the other is time from our Facilities and Operations Department. So that means Joe Sargent and Ray Przekurat. And so, we currently do not have funding budgeted for any renovations, and our F and O staff is very busy for probably another six months with our referendum projects. And we simply don't want to rush into the use, and we don't want to rush into any expenses until we know exactly how we want to use the space.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 53:24

So, at this time, the only thing that is certain is that we are going to expand the RISE program, which is currently there, and so that's a program for high special education needs students at the elementary level. So that will be expanding. And then we're going to explore other turnkey options. Where we have some open classrooms, we may move some folks over there for office purposes, but, at this time, we aren't interested in spending any dollars on renovation or Facilities time. So, any questions about where we are with our Columbus use for next year?

Oliver Zornow (Board Member) 53:57

I have a question. So just want to clarify what you just said. So, we've received some proposals. We don't have the capacity to implement any of them right now. For clarity, we're going to explore some turnkey options. Are we still—are we tabling those proposals for 6, 9, 12, months and then going to look at them, or are we kind of opting to not consider them generally? But is there—are we planning on, in six months, coming back and saying, Okay, now which of these proposals will we pursue?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 54:32

We definitely want to use the space, and we have needs for it. We want to find the best fit. And so, we're—we'll put together some type of rubric that will score the proposals with cost being one of the factors in that rubric. And so, you know, as we look at the proposals, there are some that are on very much on a very expensive end, as you can imagine, (we're talking about adding plumbing) to ones that are more on, uh, you know, affordable, which means maybe there're walls that our carpenters can build and our electricians can work on, and so really, that's going to be part of the decision making. But we absolutely, in six to nine months, we'll be looking at how best to fill that space.

Oliver Zornow (Board Member) 55:15

I just want to just follow up on real quick is that, you know, my hope is that, you know, as we get to that point, that we'll continue to look at ways that the board can open doors—right? And we'll be in our budgeting process, we'll be looking at other options, and so thinking about how we can best ensure the resources that are there so the district can find the best use for this space, not just from a more limited view of options, particularly

elevating the voices we've heard from the community about use of the space that benefits the kids in those areas.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 55:50

[Unclear] Oliver talked about the voices of [unclear] the community that you're taking into consideration on what decisions are made. But I do have a question on the expansion of the RISE program. Is that going to be additional classrooms of the program? Because right now [unclear]. And then, is there any building—are there any building changes that have to be made in order to allow the RISE program to expand?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 56:30

There are some renovations that we will have to undertake. Those come with—as we know, expanding the RISE program saves us dollars from not having to send students out of the district. And so that is an option that has a return on investment, I guess you could say, whereas our other options are clearly a budget outlay that don't come with any savings.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 56:56

So as a part of that, will we be adding staff then for those positions, or moving staff from other positions?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent - AASD) 57:07

That is the plan is that it would be staffed appropriately. And so, I can certainly have Amy Steiner at a future meeting respond to that, if you want to know more about the expansion of the RISE program, but there is a staffing model that goes with the number of students, and so if we expand, we have to include staff in that expansion. Yes.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 57:29

Yeah, I just didn't know if that was part of the budgeting process then for the future. Thank you.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 57:41

Just wanted to say I'm happy to hear about [unclear] RISE expanding, and they do great work, and they serve kids from all over the district, including kids who live in that neighborhood and the attendance area, so thank you.