



STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT MEDIA RELEASE

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SCASD Board of Directors To Vote On ELA, Library Curriculums; Discuss Elementary School Projects, Memorial Field Renovations

On Monday, Aug. 8, the State College Area School District Board of Directors will vote on, among other items, approving K-12 English Language Arts and K-5 library curriculums for the district. Both were discussed with the Board on July 25.

Additionally, the Board will hear updates on the District-wide Facilities Master Plan - Elementary Update, the Memorial Field renovations, the Professional Development School partnership with Penn State and the SCASD Education Foundation.

K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum

Work on the [proposed K-12 ELA Curriculum](#) began in the fall of 2013 when the ELA curriculum committee started mapping K-12 standards, then creating curriculum documents based on the K-12 PA Academic Standards.

Curriculum committee members had attended professional development seminars at the University of Virginia, where UVA faculty members and national education experts Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson and Dr. Jessica Hockett advised on unit mapping and curriculum writing. Hockett has been an ongoing consultant, offering support, suggestions and materials, and other curriculum experts at UVA, Penn State and Teachers College at Columbia University continue to serve as resources.

For K-6, the ELA writing units are framed around three types of writing identified in the K-12 PA Academic Standards — narrative, informational and opinion/argument. The units have the same names “to build a writing strand across grades.”

K-6 reading units were written in the same manner to provide “a spiraling approach to teaching and learning by including two literature and two nonfiction units” with opportunities for teachers to building on student learning from the first to second units within genres.

Final reading units include standards for literature and nonfiction to help students make connections across types of text. Both the reading and writing units start with a “launch unit” that establishes expectations for literacy learning.

To create the 7-12 ELA units, the curriculum committee identified focus standards at each grade level with the PA Core Standards, and organized them around themes aligned with developmentally appropriate texts. Each course includes a selection of texts, as well as student-chosen reading, writing and research projects.

K-5 Library Curriculum

Presented to the Board on July 25, the proposed [K-5 Library Curriculum](#) was started in the fall of 2015 as a “vision for the learning we want our students to demonstrate as library patrons.”

After reviewing the ELA Academic Standards and standards identified in the PA Model Library Curriculum, the library curriculum committee created four units that build on each other from grade to grade and are taught simultaneously. Additional SCASD standards, based on specific library tools such as catalogs, and learning targets derived from current research were included to support the unit goals.

In creating the curriculum’s four units, the district library department reinforced its commitment to “embracing inquiry as a grounding principle” — most notably with the research unit “Inquiring for Knowledge.” The department is committed to collaborating with classroom teachers with a library curriculum that supports and extends the ELA curriculum.

“Inquiry as a guiding principle will support students’ development as critical thinkers as they use this process to research in the classroom and library,” stated [a curriculum summary](#). “The units were created with transfer in mind: teaching students essential skills and concepts they can use and apply in any library setting.”

State High Project change orders

The Board will vote on [three recommended State High Project change orders](#), the largest of which is \$65,000 for enlarging the compressor in the air delivery system of the Career and Technical Center. The original bid turned out to be undersized.

Another change order is for \$39,000 to add a transformer, panel and switch for modular classrooms on the South Building site — an unexpected need that emerged recently as units were being set and power extended from the main building. The work is being requested as a change order so that it can be done in time for the school year.

District-wide Facilities Master Plan-Elementary Update

The district administration will inform the Board of [a revised DWFMP calendar and timeline](#) reflecting the requirements of two state grants.

According to the Department of Community and Economic Development grants awarded July 1, the proposed Radio Park and Houserville elementary school renovation or new construction projects would have to be completed substantially by June 2019.

A potential Corl Street Elementary School project, however, would not be subject to that requirement. As a result, the district administration is proposing an optional staggered project timeline in the event the Board approves three projects but does not want to start all three together.

The potential staggered timeline scenario:

Radio Park and Houserville

- Start design — November 2016
- Bid — fall of 2017
- Duration — 20 months construction
- Completion — June 2019

Corl Street

- Start design — February 2017
- Bid — February 2018
- Duration — 18 months construction
- Completion — August 2019

On July 25, the DWFMP team of district administrators and architects presented an extended the timeline toward final Board decisions on projects. **A previously scheduled Aug. 15 community forum on the master planning has been canceled, but an Oct. 17 forum (time and place to be determined) has been added.**

The timeline is as follows:

- Aug. 22 — Board meeting (Financial and demographic update)
- Sept. 7 — Facilities & Grounds Committee
- Sept. 8 — Citizens Advisory Committee for Facilities
- Sept. 12 — Board meeting
- **Sept. 19 — Community forum, 7 p.m. Mount Nittany Middle School (Financial and demographic update)**
- Sept. 26 — Board meeting
- Oct. 5 — Facilities & Grounds Committee
- **Oct. 10 — Board meeting (present final project options)**
- Oct. 13 — CAC for Facilities
- **Oct. 17 — Community forum (discuss final project selection)**
- **Oct. 24 — Board meeting (discuss final project selection)**
- Nov. 3 — Facilities & Grounds Committee
- Nov. 10 — CAC for Facilities

- **Nov. 14 — Board meeting (select project options)**

As part of Monday's update, the DWFMP team also will explain about the ongoing demographic analysis of the district's attendance areas and projected student enrollment. The report should be finished later this month.

Specifically, the district administration and demographer will study district enrollment over the last several years compared to the Centre Region's population growth, concentrating on the relationship between population projections and student enrollment, especially in light of any new housing developments within the district. From 2010 to 2014, the region's total population grew by .9 percent while the number of residents under 17 increased by 2 percent. Meanwhile, district enrollment decreased by about 5 percent as expected.

Additionally on Monday, the DWFMP team will introduce [two draft matrices](#) intended to assist the Board with project decisions, and ask board members to refine and evaluate the various criteria. The intent is to pursue a similar process to the one followed in the high school master planning. The first matrix addresses the number and size of project selections, while the second focuses on project design and features. Both were reviewed by the Facilities and Grounds and Communications committees.

Memorial Field renovations

The Board expects to hear a request for a discussion about [Memorial Field's future seating capacity](#).

The initial Request for Proposal for the renovation project indicated the capacity should return to the 2010 size of about 4,000 seats, with the potential to expand to 5,359, based on the 2011-2012 Memorial Field master plan.

In 2010, the capacity was 4,061 before it shrunk in the next few years from sinkhole repairs and bleacher reconfigurations. The current capacity is 2,502 — 1,573 on the home side, 929 on the visitors' side.

After conversations with the district athletic director and coaches, however, the project team would like to confirm a desired capacity before proceeding to the design phase. One option is to choose a 3,000-4,000 capacity. The district administration will remind the Board that adding more seats increases the number of required restrooms and increases costs. For example, expanding from 3,000 seats to 4,000 could cost an estimated \$415,000 — \$115,000 for additional restrooms and \$300,000 for the seats — though the actual expense would depend on the project's final design.

Other discussions

The Board also will hear updates on the long-running [Professional Development School K-4 partnership with Penn State](#), on [the SCASD Education Foundation](#) and on the proposed [Policy 211 - Student Accident Insurance](#).