

Spring
2012



Quarterly Report

COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Blankenship's 9th grade class poses at the White House Decision Center at the Truman Presidential Library.

ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF MID-MISSOURI LINKS TO LEARNING AWARDS

Since 1993, Columbia Public Schools teachers have been the recipients of more than \$800,000 in grants from the Assistance League of Mid-Missouri, some \$77,000 of which was awarded in 2011.

Phyllis Stoecklein with the Assistance League called the group, about 250 members in total, "committed to women and children... and education plays a key factor."

"This was the 20th year for the awards," Stoecklein said. "We have given over 1,900 awards and around \$804,000 to classroom teachers. Teachers spend a lot of their own money in the classroom - sometimes the schools don't have all the materials the teachers need."

The league received 330 applications this year and awarded 162 grants.

Brenda Blankenship, a ninth grade government teacher at West Junior High School, has been a recipient of an Assistance League grant to take her class to the White House Decision Center at the Truman Presidential Library. While there, students role play as the president and his administration during a national crisis.

"It is a great program," Blankenship said of the Truman Decision Center, "and it teaches them about the legacy of Missouri's President. If not for the Assistance League, we could not go. The grant pays for the buses to get us there."

Through Assistance League grants, Blankenship estimates nearly 5,000 West Junior High School students have been able to participate in the program since 2000.

Chris Belcher, Columbia Public Schools' superintendent, praised the Assistance League for its work. "What they do directly impacts our classroom instruction. They have generated over \$800,000 for our classrooms. I call that 'innovation capital' because it is money that our teachers can go and do something different they might not be able to do otherwise."

We have given over 1,900 awards and around \$804,000 to classroom teachers.

- Phyllis Stoecklein

MISSOURI SELECTION FOR NASA ENDEAVOR FELLOWSHIP

Just 50 teachers from across the United States were chosen for the NASA Endeavor . Kathryn "Annie" Arnone, a fifth grade teacher at Benton Elementary School, is one of the chosen few and the lone Missouri teacher selected.

At Benton, Arnone is teaching at a STEM school, which is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. STEM schools focus on these subjects to help students gain the ability to think critically, solve complex problems and drive advancements in science and technology.

The Endeavor Online STEM Certificate provides the comprehensive training educators need to effectively teach STEM content and integrate strategies within the core curriculum. Graduates become part of the special Endeavor Online Community, sharing knowledge and insight with colleagues across the nation to be on the forefront of research for practical ways to successfully integrate STEM learning in classrooms.

"The networking is phenomenal, resources from all over the country," Arnone said of the program so far. She is taking two online classes in the spring and will take two more in the summer and the last in the fall. The summer will also have Arnone traveling to the NASA space center to collaborate on classroom curriculum. In the fall she will begin her doctoral degree work at the University of Missouri.

"The goal is to make me more comfortable with integrating STEM concepts," Arnone said. "I have a background in theater and the arts. I think I was selected because I put forth the desire to be better at STEM. People have to have the desire to learn. It is not that I am the best at science and math, but I have that desire."



Teacher Annie Arnone talks about an upcoming parachute project with her class at Benton Elementary School.

BOND AND LEVY Q&A

The Columbia Board of Education has called a special election on Tuesday, April 3, to submit proposals for a property tax levy increase and a bond issue with a debt service levy increase to Columbia voters. The bond issue proposal requires 57 percent approval and the levy increase proposal requires simple majority approval.

Q. What is the amount of the proposed tax levy increase?

A. 40 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Q. Why does the district need a tax levy increase?

A. The tax levy increase is necessary due to a loss in state funding. State funding cuts place more responsibility on local revenue sources to meet school funding needs. Additionally, the local assessed valuation is nearly flat and federal revenues are also likely to see reductions.

Q. How will funds from a tax levy increase be spent?

A. The tax levy increase will generate an additional \$7.5 to \$8 million per year in revenue. Those funds will be used to offset the loss in state funding to:

- sustain current programs, including intervention and enrichment programs for students
- maintain and improve class sizes
- meet student needs
- address classroom technology needs

Q. Is the district going to make any budget cuts to help its financial situation?

A. The district has cut more than \$20 million and 250 staff positions from its budget over the last four years. Further cuts to the budget will result in larger class sizes and reductions in intervention and enrichment programs for students.

Q. Did the community just vote for a tax increase?

A. No, the community approved a no-tax-rate-increase bond issue in 2010 to fund new school construction, air conditioning and necessary building maintenance and improvements. The last tax levy increase approved by voters was in 2003.

Q. Why not use district reserves to cover the loss in state funding?

A. Simply, the reserve fund is a savings account. In Columbia Public Schools, those funds are meant to be used to cover payroll and district expenses when revenue funds are not available as well as to cover unpredictable emergency expenses. For example, the district uses reserves to help meet cash flow needs from month to month due to the timing of when local, state and federal funding revenues arrive.

Q. What is the amount of district reserves?

A. In 2010-11, the district reserves were 22.47 percent or \$34.9 million. It takes roughly \$30 million in the reserve fund to pay expenditures at tax collection time without borrowing. Additionally, the district has been building its reserves using one-time federal stimulus funds in order to prepare for one-time expenses associated with the opening of Battle High School. School districts should maintain at least 16 percent in reserve funds in order to be solvent and maintain a high financial credit rating, which lowers the cost of borrowing.

Q. What is the difference between a tax levy and a bond issue?

A. By law, bond issues only provide funds for new construction, renovation of existing facilities, technology and the purchase of equipment. Tax levy funds are used to pay for operating costs such as salaries, benefits, materials and supplies.

Q. What is the amount of the proposed bond issue?

A. \$50 million. The bond issue proposal will also require a 12-cent debt service levy increase in order to continue the rate at which bond debt is paid down. The increase will allow the district to maintain its high financial credit rating.

Q. How will the funds be spent?

A. The \$50 million bond will address three main areas:

- Building Improvements - \$8.8 million will be used for building improvements such as roofing, tuckpointing, foundation repairs, asphalt and concrete repairs, fire sprinkler system upgrades and environmental compliance improvements.
- Construction - \$39.2 million will be used for new construction, including:
 - \$20 million for a new 650-student elementary school in south Columbia including the purchase of land and the necessary technology and furniture;
 - \$8 million for an early childhood learning center located on the Lange Middle School property to serve 800 students and eliminate 10 trailers currently in use;
 - \$5 million for a 25,000-square-foot addition to Shepard Boulevard Elementary School to eliminate 12 trailers currently in use;
 - \$4 million for a 20,000-square-foot addition to West Boulevard Elementary School to eliminate 6 trailers currently in use; and
 - \$2.2 million for a kitchen expansion at Lange Middle School to better serve surrounding schools with freshly prepared food.
- Technology - \$2 million for wireless network expansion, replacement of network switches, servers and storage area networks.

Q. Why is there a need for these items?

A. The Board of Education has adopted goals based on an evaluation of district facilities. These goals include reducing overcrowding in schools, including reducing the number of trailers; improving the physical and learning environments in all facilities; reducing the number of student grade-level transitions; and increasing the functional life and efficiency of facilities.

Q. Why now?

A. Requesting approval to access bond funds now will allow for further long-range planning. Failing to move now will put the district further behind in addressing growth and building needs. Additionally, many trailers have reached their life span and will need to be replaced should the bond issue not pass.

Q. Is there a long-range plan for facilities?

A. Yes. The plan development included community engagement to determine priorities; an evaluation of each building's ability to support current and future programs; and an engineering study of the physical condition and energy efficiency of our buildings. Based on these studies, the planning committee made recommendations to the Board of Education to address school facilities in the district. Those recommendations are reflected in this bond proposal. The district also plans to present another \$50 million bond proposal to voters in 2014 to continue with implementation of the long-range facilities plan and the elimination of trailers by 2020.

Q. What about the projects approved in the 2010 bond issue?

A. The district is making significant progress on the projects approved in the 2010 bond issue. Construction of Battle High School is 70 percent complete and is on time and on budget. The air conditioning engineering plans and project bids are complete. The district will air-condition 5 elementary schools this summer. The remaining schools will be completed by 2014. The construction of the gyms at Hickman and Rock Bridge high schools is under way and will be completed in 2013. The land for the new elementary school set to open in 2015 has been purchased and planning is in progress. Building maintenance and improvement projects have been completed, including a new roof at Hickman High School.

Q. Are bond funds being used to pay for the addition at the district's administration building?

A. No. The district has taken out a 26-year loan to cover the cost of the administration building addition. The addition will allow the district to eliminate lease payments at two facilities. Those funds will be used to pay for the cost of the loan. Additionally, the new addition will result in \$70,000 in utility savings annually due to the efficiency of the building.

For more information visit: www.columbia.k12.us/bondlevy.php

FOURTH WORLD CAFÉ HELD NOVEMBER 2011

In November 2011 the fourth meeting of the World Café community conversation series was held with the ultimate goal of determining next steps in eliminating the achievement gap.

November's meeting hosted a special guest, Jeff Edmundson, part of the STRIVE program. STRIVE uses a framework of community involvement and infrastructure to successfully tackle similar problems in the Cincinnati and northern Kentucky areas.

The STRIVE framework instituted in the Cincinnati area has four pillars: 1) Shared community vision, 2) Evidence-based decision making, 3) Collaborative action and 4) Investment and sustainability.

"Instead of going out and building a new program, build on what you have. Narrow your metrics to a chosen few and work on sharing a common agenda."

Data was an area Edmundson also stressed, stating that if he could do just one thing to help it would be to build a data platform, bringing together early childhood data, kindergarten through 12th grade and also social services. "Having data is not the problem," he said. "Focusing the data is the problem."

"These ideas are nationwide," said Chris Belcher, Columbia Public Schools' superintendent. We have been designated as a STRIVE community and can use that framework to continue these conversations.

"We are developing a network of agencies and companies to share data and look at sharing the same goals - broaden perspectives. There is work to be done to get it on the table before we bring it back for the next World Café," Belcher said.

NEW BOUNDARIES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

"Approach B" may not say much as a name, but for hundreds of Columbia Public Schools students "Approach B" will determine where they will attend intermediate and high school. The Board approved the recommendations by the Secondary Enrollment Planning Committee for new boundary lines in February.

The decision came after the committee of 22 worked through more than 140 scenarios, volunteering their time for over a year. The committee's work is the result of the district's reorganization of its secondary level. The addition of Battle High School in 2013-14 and the decision to combine the three middle and three junior high schools into one, six-school, intermediate level necessitated redrawn boundaries. The plan features paired intermediate schools feeding into each high school.

"The process was done very well," Chris Belcher, the district's superintendent, said of the work done by the committee. "The board is very confident in their work."

Next for the secondary boundary process is working on the transition process. Wanda Brown, the district's assistant superintendent for secondary education, said that one immediate aspect of the process is that 113 ninth grade students in the current Hickman or Rock Bridge boundaries will be switching to the other high school under the new boundaries. Those students will be allowed to transfer to their new high school beginning this fall, as opposed to after attending the 2012-13 year and then moving to the new school. This will allow their high school experience to be uninterrupted. Those students participating in spring sports will be allowed to transfer immediately. Transportation will be available for those students.

The district will be sending letters this summer to all middle and high school students, letting them know which school they will attend in 2013-14. The principals at the intermediate and high schools will also collaborate on the best ways to ease the transitions for students. "We will look to group kids together who will have similar experiences," Brown said.

This spring, ninth graders who will make up Battle High School's student body, will get a tour of the new school, "We hope this will start to get the kids excited about their school," Brown said. The district also plans to have a number of activities for students and families to allow them to become more familiar with their new school.

BATTLE HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS NAMED



The following seven leadership positions come more than a year before the opening of Battle High School in the fall of 2013. The staff members will join Principal Kim Presko, who was named in November 2011.

"The school district considered several outstanding candidates as it went through the process of selecting the leadership for Battle High School," said Superintendent Chris Belcher. "We wanted individuals who would provide strong leadership and aid in community development for the school as the culture, building environment and student population are being identified."

BATTLE HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

■ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL ANDREW MCCARTHY

Andrew McCarthy is currently serving as an assistant principal at Hickman High School.

■ ATHLETIC DIRECTOR/ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL MATTHEW HALE

Matthew Hale earned his master's degree in school administration from Southeast Missouri State University and joins Columbia Public Schools from Cape Girardeau High School.

■ ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL JACOB SIRNA

Jacob Sirna is currently serving his second year as assistant principal at Oakland Junior High School.

■ DIRECTOR OF GUIDANCE LEIGH SPENCE

Leigh Spence is currently a counselor at Hickman High School.

■ BAND DIRECTOR ROBERT THALHUBER

Robert Thalhuber is currently the associate director of bands at Rock Bridge High School.

■ CHORAL DIRECTOR JAZZ RUCKER

Jazz Rucker is currently the vocal music educator at Lange Middle School.

■ MEDIA SPECIALIST JAYME PINGREY

Jayme Pingrey is currently the media specialist at Oakland Junior High School.

■ HEAD FOOTBALL COACH JUSTIN CONYERS

Justin Conyers is currently a physical education teacher and assistant head football coach at Rock Bridge High School.

"We are thrilled to have a very talented group of student-centered educators to begin the traditions of excellence at Battle High School," said Presko.

Presko, Spence and Pingrey will officially begin their roles in July 2012; however, all will begin participating in planning and transition discussions for the opening of the new school immediately.

NEWS (you can use)

CRESSET EARNS GOLD

The *Cresset*, Hickman High School's yearbook, has been honored as a gold medalist in the Columbia Scholastic Press Association National Critique. This is the highest rating any yearbook can receive from the association's critique.

COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS EARNS PRESTIGIOUS DISTINCTION IN PERFORMANCE AWARD

For the eighth year in row Columbia Public Schools has earned the state's prestigious Distinction in Performance award for academic achievement and progress during the last school year (2010-11).

SEVENTEEN CPS STUDENTS NAMED NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS

Seventeen students from Hickman and Rock Bridge high schools have been named National Merit Semifinalists. To qualify for a National Merit scholarship, students must take the preliminary SAT, the first screening for entrants to the program. Rock Bridge Semifinalists are: Christian Ackmann, David Berry, Riaz Helfer, Katherine Hobbs, Elena Horvit, Avantika Khatri, Amy Scott, Nicholas Sun, Methma Udawatta, Christina Wang, Walter Wang, and Angela Zhang. Hickman Semifinalists are: Carter Datz, Jeanna Hoffman, Daniel Hwang, Anne Marie Van Doren, and Avery Wagner.

HICKMAN STUDENTS RECEIVE WRITING HONOR

Hickman High School has two of the eight Missouri recipients of the National Council of Teachers of English Achievement Award in Writing. Students Avery Wagner and Carter Datz were recognized as excellent writers by judges through the awards program.

BELCHER NAMED EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

Columbia Public Schools' Business Services, The Missouri Association of Educational Office Professionals (MAEOP) has named Columbia Public Schools Superintendent Chris Belcher as Educational Administrator of the Year.

ROCK BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS PLACE FIRST, SECOND IN STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Rock Bridge High School won its first-ever Class 4 boys cross country state and the girls team took second. Both are firsts for the Rock Bridge cross country program.

STUDENTS RAISE MORE THAN \$30,000 FOR CENTRAL MISSOURI HONOR FLIGHT

Columbia Public Schools joined forces with Jefferson City Public Schools and other schools in Cole County to raise funds for Central Missouri Honor Flight to send World War II veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit their national memorial. Students, staff and faculty from Columbia Public Schools raised more than \$21,000. The funds will help send more than 70 veterans to Washington, D.C.

COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED FOR FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) recognized Columbia Public Schools and 58 other school districts for 25 years or more of participation in the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting (COE) program. The Certificate of Excellence program supports and recognizes districts' high-quality financial reporting to the community through exceptional Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs). As recipients of the COE, school districts have verified that credibility, confidence and transparency are essential to demonstrate sound fiscal management and professional growth.

SIEMENS FOUNDATION FINALISTS AND SEMIFINALISTS

Two Columbia Public Schools students have been recognized by the Siemens Foundation competition in math, science and technology. Hickman High School student Lawrence Zhang was named a semifinalist in the competition and Rock Bridge High School student Nicholas Sun was named a regional finalist. The Siemens Foundation award is the highest science honor awarded to high school students.

HICKMAN STUDENTS SCORE IN TOP 100 IN CALCULUS COMPETITION

Hickman High School students Mingu Kim & Bowen Yang scored in the Top 100 on the national AP Calculus Online Competition Match I. More than 3,856 students participated in the competition.

CPS RECEIVES GREEN CLEANING AWARD

Columbia Public Schools has been chosen to receive the Grand Award in the K-12 category of the 2011 Green Cleaning Award for Schools & Universities, sponsored by American School & University magazine, The Green Cleaning Network, and Healthy Schools Campaign.

HICKMAN ARTS MAGAZINE NUMBER ONE IN STATE

The 2010-11 *Hickman Review*, Hickman's literary arts magazine, has been awarded the number one ranking in Missouri with a Superior/Highest Award by the National Council of Teachers of English. The 2010-2011 editor-in-chief for the *Hickman Review* was Shawna Burhans, the art editor was Zoe McDougall and the manuscript editor was Anna McMurry. The faculty co-sponsors were Carolyn Chipley-Foster and Nancy White.

CPS SCHOOL LUNCH RECOGNIZED FOR HEALTHY CHANGES

The Columbia Public Schools' Nutrition Services program has been recognized by the Food Family Farming Foundation for the many improvements to school lunches in the 2010-11 school year. Beginning in 2010-11, rice and beans were served for lunch every day, salad bars were spruced up, schools were partnered with local farmers, and oatmeal and fresh fruit were added to the breakfast menu.

APRIL 3 BOND ISSUE AND TAX LEVY PROPOSALS

The Columbia Board of Education has called a special election on April 3, to submit proposals for the citizens of Columbia to consider a 40-cent property tax levy and a \$50 million bond issue with a 12-cent debt service levy increase. The levy and the bond are necessary to sustain current programs, maintain and improve class sizes, meet classroom technology needs and address facility needs throughout the school district, measures necessitated by enrollment growth and the goal for the district to be rid of all 153 trailers currently used for instruction.

"The 2010 bond was dedicated to secondary capacity needs," said Chris Belcher, Columbia Public Schools superintendent, of the bond currently being used to fund construction of Battle High School, new gyms at Rock Bridge and Hickman high schools and air conditioning, among many other projects. "The 2012 bond and tax levy are going to build a new elementary school, new early childhood center, additions at two schools and move the district closer to getting out of the trailers."

The trailers are a big issue for Columbia. "Springfield School District, the state's largest district, currently has zero trailers. Columbia has 153," said Belcher. Trailers house 23 percent of all students in Columbia Public Schools.

"By 2020 we want to be out of the trailers," Belcher said, noting that many trailers are 18 years old and were designed for 11 to 12 years of use. "There is no way to get rid of the trailer issue without increasing the debt service, which has not been raised in over 20 years."



Opening Battle High School will remove 50 trailers from the district. If the April 3 proposals are approved, the new elementary school built with those funds will allow the district to remove another 27 trailers. Additions to Shepard Boulevard and West Boulevard elementary schools will remove another 18 trailers.

The April proposal will also allow the district to build a new early childhood center near Lange Middle School, freeing up 400 seats in the current elementary schools and removing even more trailers.

Budget uncertainty at the state level has left the school funding formula underfunded for the last three years. Columbia Public Schools receives 33 percent of its funding from the state.

"If we would have been fully funded," Belcher said, "the current levy would be OK, but the levy increase is a response to decreased state funding. The university is looking at raising tuition again, by 7.5 percent. That's how they deal with budget deficits. We ask the public to support us with a property tax increase. We have grown by 500 kids over the last four years."

Enrollment, which for the 2011-12 school year is 17,925 students, is projected to rise by nearly 800 by 2015-16.

The state of Missouri is 49th out of 51 states, including Washington, D.C., in state support for public education. If approved, the bond levy would be raised from 81 cents to 93 cents per \$100 of assessed property value and the tax levy raised 40 cents to \$4.4793 per \$100 of assessed valuation. The owner of a home valued at \$150,000 would see an annual increase of \$148.20.

2012 SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

This summer, Columbia Public Schools will continue offering exciting and enriching summer programs for students.

PROGRAMS AND DATES ARE:

JUNE 4 - 29

Columbia Summer SUNsations offers free summer school sessions for students entering kindergarten through eighth grade.

The Secondary Summer School High School Credit program is available for Columbia Public Schools students entering ninth through 12th grades. This program offers opportunities for credit advancement and credit completion and includes a variety of online as well as classroom course options.

- Freshman Academy provides additional academic support for students entering 9th grade
- Gifted Education (EEE) for grades 2-5 and 6-8
- Summer Expedition is a four-week program for high-potential minority and/or free reduced lunch students who are not being served by gifted services.
- Special Education Extended School Year (ESY)
- Early Childhood Special Education

JUNE 3- JUNE 14

2012 MAC Scholars Summer Academy is a live-in academic experience at the University of Missouri for entering 10th grade high potential minority students.

JUNE 4- JULY 27

FUN City Youth Academy is a new community partnership serving minority students over the course of an eight-week program.

JUNE 11- AUGUST 3

The Columbia Area Career Center Summer Camp for Youth is a tuition-based program for youth ages 10 to 15. No camps the week of the 4th of July.

JUNE 11-28

The Columbia Summer Enrichment Preschool is a tuition-based program available for students between the ages of three and five. This is the first of two sessions.

JUNE 18-29

Arts Explorers Fine Arts Camp at Shepard Boulevard Elementary
This camp is for select elementary students entering grades 4-5.

JULY 9-20

Secondary Choral and Instrumental Music - choir, orchestra and band courses for secondary music students entering grades 7 - 9.

JULY 9-26

The Columbia Summer Enrichment program is a tuition-based program for students entering kindergarten through grade 8. During this three-week session, students participate in courses selected from a wide variety of offerings.

The Columbia Summer Enrichment Preschool is a tuition-based program available for students between the ages of three and five. This is the second of two sessions.

BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE

Adventure Club is an extended day program for school-age students delivered by the University of Missouri College of Education. It provides a supervised before- and/or after-school program throughout the month of June. There are additional sessions available as a full-day program that runs throughout the month of July. This tuition-based program requires a non-refundable registration fee for enrollment.

A+ TUTORING

Opportunities for tutoring in summer school may be arranged for secondary students enrolled in the A+ program. Tutor training is in late April, with assignments to programs made in May. A+ students should contact the A+ coordinator in their building for additional information.

ADDITIONAL SUMMER PROGRAMS

Information regarding summer camps/programs sponsored by various organizations, colleges and universities is often available in school guidance and/or principal offices.

CPS ADMINISTRATION BUILDING TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS

Changes are under way at the district's central administration building located at 1818 West Worley Street. In a cost savings effort to eliminate the use of leased facilities as well as to create greater efficiencies in operations, the school district is adding 40,000 square feet to the existing administration building.

The district has leased two facilities to house its business and accounting staff, information technology staff, Parents As Teachers and curriculum departments for nearly 20 years. The building addition will replace the need to lease those two properties located on Vandiver and Bernadette drives.

The school district secured a 26-year loan from a local bank to construct the addition and will use funds originally spent on rent to pay for the loan. Once the loan is paid off the district will save \$500,000 a year in rent. The district will also save approximately \$70,000 a year in utility costs due to the energy-efficient

design of the addition, including a ground-source heating and air-conditioning system. Additionally, housing all district administration in one building will allow for increased communication and collaboration among employees and with district patrons.

The Board-of-Education-approved project budget is \$8 million, nearly the same cost paid to lease the Bernadette Drive and Vandiver Drive facilities for the past 20 years.

West Junior High School and the Columbia's Farmers Market will also benefit from the administration building addition. West Junior High School will receive an improved outdoor track and practice field as a result of the construction, and trails are being built to connect the administration building's parking lot to the ARC to allow for additional parking for the Farmers Market.

The building, including the new addition, will house 142 employees and will be completed in July 2012.

BOND UPDATE: 2010 BOND MAKING BIG IMPROVEMENTS

The \$120 million voter-approved 2010 bond keeps working its way through Columbia Public Schools. Battle High School is more than halfway completed and work is under way on new gyms at Rock Bridge and Hickman high schools.

Deputy Superintendent Nick Boren puts the construction of Battle High School at about 60 percent complete as of February. The site averages around 140 workers a day, a number assisted by the mild winter months of November, December and January. Most of the work is being done on the inside of the building, as Battle’s main structure is about 98 percent complete, Boren said.

A big next step is outfitting the school with all the furnishings a school needs: tables and chairs, fixtures, equipment, technology, desks, and office furniture. “It is a tremendous number of items,” Boren said.

“Battle High School is on schedule if not ahead of schedule,” said Boren of the August 2013 opening. Some of the school’s administration will move in as soon as January of 2013.

Battle’s road improvements are completed, as a four-way stop signal now exists, along with Battle Avenue and Spartan Way, two new roads serving the school.

At both Hickman and Rock Bridge high schools, work on the new gyms is “fully under way,” Boren said. Most of the work being done is site excavation, pouring piers and placing guide beams. Boren counts the mostly dry and warm winter as an asset, putting the project at a “great pace.”

Bond money will also fund air conditioning and window improvements at a number of district schools. Five schools - Two Mile Prairie, Midway Heights, Grant, Lee and Ridgeway - will receive air conditioning improvements this summer. Eleven schools will have old, inefficient windows replaced by insulated, energy, efficient windows.

All of the projects identified in the 2010 bond proposal will be completed by the 2014-15 school year. Follow our progress at: www.columbia.k12.mo.us/bondtrack

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- ASSISTANCE LEAGUE OF MID-MISSOURI LINKS TO LEARNING AWARDS
- MISSOURI SELECTION FOR NASA ENDEAVOR FELLOWSHIP
- BOND AND LEVY Q & A
- FOURTH WORLD CAFE HELD NOVEMBER 2011
- NEW BOUNDARIES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- BATTLE HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS NAMED
- NEWS YOU CAN USE
- APRIL 3 BOND ISSUE AND TAX LEVY PROPOSALS
- 2012 SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
- ADMINISTRATION BUILDING TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



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Administration Building
1818 W. Worley
Columbia, MO 65203



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