



Citizens Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for July 10, 2024

Attendance:

In-person

Members: Rose Hill, Pat Jasso, Maria Cruz, Amado Briseno, Robert Corpus, Robert Sipes, Angela Cassidy

District representatives: Yvonne Little, Jenny Arredondo, Nkonye Adaikpoh, Claudia Padilla, Troy Spear, Laura Short, Christina Martinez

Virtually

Members: Pam Carpenter, John Burnam, Karla Duran

Meeting Minutes:

- A highlights reel featuring various major renovation projects was shared with the members.
- A member asked whether it is anticipated that the projects would be completed by 2025.
- Yvonne Little said that phases of the projects would be finished by 2025, but each project has their own schedule. She said some of the projects are finishing in 2024 and noted they had just had the punch walk for Rogers College Prep Middle School that day, which would be ready for the start of the new school year.
- Pat Jasso said that one of the things the committee had said, because we are going to be coming up on another bond soon, is they would like to make sure they finish the school. She noticed that Brackenridge still has some work to do. Is this work at Brackenridge going to complete everything or are there still some renovations that are needed?
- A member asked about being kept informed of events, such as ribbon cuttings.



- Michelle Jimenez said that there would be a ribbon ceremony of some type of dedication ceremony for each campus and that she would be sure to invite them to those types of events.
- A member asked about the downsizing of schools and the bond monies that were allocated for those schools that didn't get finished. Where is that money going to?
- Yvonne Little provided a program-level update.
 - 13 campuses are under construction
 - 50% of the program is completed or under construction.
- Michelle Jimenez said there was a lot of stuff happening behind the scenes that contributed to the complexity of this bond program.
- Yvonne Little shared about how the district had to phase the bond projects. At the onset of the program there were 36 construction projects and to put 36 projects out on the street at the same time would have been to our own detriment. We would have flooded the market. There are not 36 quality contractors out there or subcontractors out there to be able to work and have the bandwidth, the labor, with which to be able to support our projects and ensure that we can enforce the schedule the way we want to. So, phasing the projects was a huge strategy in controlling our costs on the projects and so we did have 4 phases. Phase 1 was two projects with Bowden and JT Brack and those are rounding out right now and about to be finished and then Phase 2 was a lot of our projects that were in Bond 2016. They were mostly the comprehensive high schools, of course, we did have Irving Dual Language and Longfellow and Rogers that were also part of Bond 2016 that we were doing the finish out in this project right now. And then now we're starting to enter the third phase. Phase three was that next round, most of them being elementaries with very high population that had a very great need because of the age of their facility. Phase 3 had not had any previous work, and the need was great as it is in all of our facilities. And so unfortunately due to the pandemic we had to do some value-engineering.
- Major impacts at the onset of bond, of course inflation. We planned our bond in 2018-2019 and went out for voter approval in 2020 and then pandemic COVID hit driving up construction costs, driving up labor costs causing supply chain issues across the market, so we had to battle a lot of that.



- The regulatory changes as well, we had some TEA guidelines come down that required us to have educational specifications and those were introduced to our bond program after the bond had already passed. So working with that and then the flood zones were changed for the City of San Antonio, so there were some projects that we strategically held off a little bit – Tafolla was one of them with Apache Creek being right there – because designing a building and then having to move it 8 feet this way because the corner of it was now in the flood zone, wouldn't have been a good appropriation of our funds to have to redesign at that point. So strategic planning, processing and timing have been utilized throughout the entire program.
- At one point the bond program was about \$400 million over budget. That was based on forecasted costs, pre-design costs. In November 2022, we came up with these strategies in order to look at our bond program. Just lopping off a whole section and scope of work isn't what we want to do. We want to try to get every single penny in the project that our kids need.
- The district removed the LEED certification requirement for contractors.
- It changed the procurement method for the football and soccer and tennis fields. The district took out the football field and soccer field at all the comprehensive high schools that were selected to receive artificial turf. We took it out of the project and are bundling it together in one project so that we can take advantage of bulk pricing. We're even contemplating purchasing the turf ourselves so that we can get the bulk discount and then our contractors can just pull from it for whatever warehouse we have it in at the manufacturer and that will save us a lot having it as an owner-furnished contractor-installed item.
- Refurbishing and improving the high school softball and baseball fields. Originally, we were thinking of doing those in artificial turf, but costs just made those things to where it wasn't going to be prohibitive to do that. So, we've gone back. We've treated the fields. We've either put new fields if we are reorienting the field, we have gone ahead and gone back with natural grass.
- And then we have accepted value-engineering to bring the projects closer to budget. In some instances, that does mean eliminating a scope of work, but we do that in collaboration with the campuses, with the community and with our staff and with our engineers to make sure that we're focusing on the students' needs.



- Possibly designing that portion and going ahead and doing what we call a master plan saying it's all designed, we know that it'll work, we just can't do this piece right now, saving it to possibly a different phase. A lot of times, using a CMR delivery method, when you get to about 80%, you're able to look at buyout savings if there's money, if there's contingencies left, maybe we can go ahead and add on that piece. But doing it in stages and phases allows us a little bit more flexibility than putting all our eggs in one basket.
- And then, of course, transferring project inflation contingency. You plan in a bond project for inflation, but typically it's 2 to 5%, not 75 to 125, which is what we saw during the pandemic. So, moving that money over and trying to give it back to the campus to do as much as possible was our strategy.
- Like I said, we don't want to just cut off the scope. So again, when we sat down and did value-engineering exercises, we sat down with the campus and asked what is the priority? What do you need to fulfill your programmatic needs and how can we help you know support that with the bond dollars?
- Some projects we will have to push to the next bond. I think that was somebody's question. Brackenridge did have to make the decision -- we can get you everything here, but I'm not going to be able to fully renovate your auditorium, and those are decisions that we have had to make.
- But what we try to do is, is there something in the auditorium that we can get? Can we get you a new lighting control panel? Can we get you some new rigging? Can we do something that will make that program still have a betterment to it? So we've tried to make those accommodations.
- Michelle Jimenez added that the district goes through a multi-level process when determining where to streamline a project, such as first looking at the materials being used? What can be changed that still provides quality but isn't as expensive?
- Yvonne Little added that one of the benefits to having a construction-manager-at-risk process is they bring their expertise to the table. So, a lot of times our contractors will come to us and say, 'Instead of the XYZ chiller, you should get the ABC chiller.'
- If we're just looking at the bottom line, it would be like, OK, great, that sounds cool. That's 50% of the cost. I'll take it. But we don't just do that. We'll have a meeting with our Facilities team, and we have them look up, can you get parts for



this chiller? Do you have skilled trades that can work on this chiller? Because if the answer is no, then it's not really a savings. It may be a savings on the upfront. But then am I going to be able to maintain it on the back end, right? So, every single deviation from our standards has to be thoroughly reviewed and that's what takes a long time.

- Yvonne Little shared that she took over in March 2023, and she is restructuring the Construction and Development Service Department. We're putting our own in-house project managers to manage these projects. In Bond 2010, it was completely outsourced to a PM firm. In Bond 2016, we did have in-house PMs. I have 13 PM positions and we are strategically hiring people from the construction industry that understand what to look for. We're hiring inspectors so that we can do a QAQC process so that we can make sure that we're getting what we pay for and so that your dollars are going into the right type of infrastructure updates.
- Yvonne Little shared that changes to the bond program were an effect of Rightsizing, not a cause of Rightsizing.
- We canceled seven projects due to the Rightsizing closure and those buildings were located on the same campus or consolidated into multiple schools.
- Like I said, we were more than \$402 million over budget. Even with our most strategic and dedicated value engineering, we were still at a deficit.
- So, although we recouped some of those funds, a lot of those funds went to just make us in the black. And so whatever funds we did receive, which was about \$2 million in the black, we are using to look at HVAC, safety and security, and then potentially any other savings that we get from any other projects, how can we fulfill any scope to the current bond projects that we can put back into it. Everything will go back into our bond projects.
- One of the instances that we had is Foster Elementary School moved to Schenck, so that was another opportunity that Rightsizing gave us because Foster closed, we were getting ready to have to put a 14 portable compound on Schenck's property to renovate Schenck at the cost of about a million dollars.
- We were able to use Foster as our swing space. Foster closed, so we're moving the Schenck kids over to Foster for the two years that we're going to do construction. No portables, contractor gets to do a project on a completely unoccupied campus, also saving a million dollars. That 2 million gets to go back



into Schenck's renovations to be able to do more for kids for the long run instead of going into temporary facilities and into the general contractor's pocket. So those are instances in which we were able to benefit from Rightsizing and leverage that opportunity.

- Carroll Elementary, also the same thing. MLK will be completely renovated, so we were able to move the kids into the closing Gates campus, while we renovate MLK on a completely unoccupied campus. That also saves time, but it saves money as well because the GC gets to work faster.
- There are a couple of other projects that due to right sizing we had to make some improvements to, so Forbes Elementary School closed and is receiving Steele Elementary. Steele was on our bond, and so we're able to use some of those bond funds to make Forbes into a more Montessori like environment.
- Moving steel into a better facility, because Forbes had a better facility conditions index, I get to do more of the good stuff. I don't have to go renovate a whole wing. I just get to do some of the nice natural finishes, nice lighting that is typically seen in a Montessori building. So, we're able to get more for Steele for less money by moving them over.
- Maverick Elementary School will receive Baskin students. There's some definite need for cafeteria and extra classroom spaces there, so we'll look into that.
- Lowell, with Kelly being closed, Lowell was a middle school, so renovating a portion of their science rooms -- science rooms are usually double the size of classrooms -- we were able to cut them in half, use the water in the sink to make bathrooms, which is required for early childhood. So, we were able to use a lot of that already existing infrastructure. We're making a whole brand-new early childhood wing.
- Washington received our Pre-K-5 students and so we were able to do some small improvements there.
- As some of you know, in January we had an HVAC crisis. There was an after-action report published in May at the board meeting and it's on our website. I encourage everybody to take a look at it. Among the findings, the board directed the superintendent to call for another review of our campus capacity. We are very conscious of that and watching and monitoring that and that study is looking to be completed in November of 2025.



- Michelle Jimenez added that we will update this group as we know more, if there's any impact.
- Yvonne touched on artificial turf. She said she knows that is a question. That's something we talked a little bit about at the last meeting. From a maintenance standpoint, we do feel it is cost effective to put the artificial turf in. We are going to design them and have them ready because it is something that the community asked for, and then we'll take that to the board for approval. We expect that to go to the board by May 2025.
- Regarding, HVAC, Yvonne Little shared that another update on the HVAC. We had 52 campuses receive HVAC updates, brand new chillers, brand new boilers, brand new automated DVC controls. It is a component replacement, not a full central plant replacement...but still with proper maintenance that should last those campuses another 20 to 30 years.
- Michelle Jimenez provided an update and technology and security. She noted how the wi-fi upgrades are making it to where the campus as a whole can become a learning environment because you can now easily connect to Wi-Fi in the auditoriums, cafeterias and outdoor spaces.
- Also, by the start of the school year, 100% of classrooms, teachers, admins and paraprofessionals will have received new SMART boards and computers. And I think the milestone we've talked about is that it will be the first time in SAISD history that there is equitable access to this type of technology throughout our district.
- Yvonne Little circled back to HVAC. She said we had a lot of chillers installed this summer, and it wasn't a result of what happened in January. Those chillers were designed and ordered 22 months ago. The construction department has been working in lockstep with our Facilities department to really work together on how to improve our HVAC infrastructure and what that looks like. And and I can say we've made huge strides, and I know it's not always visible.
- Michelle Jimenez shared that if you look at the number of schools receiving HVAC upgrades it's 52. That's about half of our campuses. Thirty of those are standalone campuses, so that means that they don't have major renovations going on. We're just doing HVAC work. We're more than 90% done with those 30. There are just two more campuses left and those will be completed this summer.



And then the other 22 are in progress. They will receive their upgrades as the renovations are being done.

- Pat Jasso asked whether the 30 and 22 numbers represented separate campuses.
- Michelle Jimenez said that they are not overlapped. There's only one campus that is in both of those categories. They are distinct numbers.
- Yvonne Little shared that Schenck Elementary is currently closed for renovation, and the renovation will be two stories, so it needs a bigger chiller. The chiller that Schenck has now still has about 10-15 years of life. We were able to harvest it and take it over to Rogers Middle School. We have been using every single bit of investment that we have to stretch as far as we can.
- Michelle Jimenez provided a bond communications update, touching on the various activities around disseminating bond updates to stakeholders since she took the role in March, including social media, website, video, and events.
- Nkonye Adaikpoh shared a question posed by John Burnham, who was attending online: How much are we still in the red?
- Yvonne Little said we are not in the red.
- Dr. Duran, also attending virtually, said that she liked that the community could access the video updates, as the committee suggested last year.
- One of the members asked where the bond money from the seven schools that closed went.
- Yvonne Little said a lot of that money went to bringing us into the black. We were still at about a \$188 million deficit. The money from the closed schools that was recovered was about \$157 million. So, the delta of that is what we have to try to go back and like I said, we had a strategic process on how, if we had money, how that would be spent and that would be HVAC because there's just so much need. Just to put that in perspective, we just did a facility conditions assessment where we had an engineering team go out and visit every single campus and do a thorough assessment. Right now, our need, just in MEP -- mechanical, electrical, plumbing -- \$573 million need is what we're looking at right now. So prioritizing HVAC, of course, not wanting what happened in January to happen again, safety and security. And then looking to see if there's any major scope that was cut off from any of the originally designated bond projects, if there's anything that we can put back there, then we're looking at that.



- Another member asked: the seven that had already had HVAC work, has that already been reallocated and is that seven included in the 28 completed?
- Yvonne Little said that none of the seven bond projects that were cancelled had any construction happening yet (in this bond). But we did spend money on design on those seven projects. She clarified that of the seven campuses where projects were canceled, those schools may have had HVAC from a previous bond that was repurposed, but not from Bond 2020.
- Amado Briseno asked about the turf. He said that the district had previously thought of doing away with the turf since the bond program was over budget and staying with natural grass. He said at that time he recalled professional sports teams are realizing now that that's not the best thing because it causes sometimes injuries.... The professionals that have been using turf already for 10-15 years, though it does save money, also the quality for the players is not safe. So, have we taken that into consideration?
- Yvonne Little said we did. She was not here when Bond 2020 was originally planned but she knows a lot of research was done. She said you can find studies going both ways. At the end of the day, turf has improved, and you are seeing less injuries from what they have been able to pull up. Products have improved, and we are actually looking at a fill that's an EPDM product. It's a very light green plastic-type product. And it's actually about 40 degrees cooler than any other fill out there on the market right now, and it's the same cost. It's not that the board has decided to move forward with turf. We will take the pricing to them, and they will decide at that point. But we are going to go ahead and design them because most of the school districts around our area... Northside, North East, they all have moved to artificial turf fields. They play on it when we're at Alamo Stadium. They play on it at the Spring Sports Complex. So our kids are on it. And so we just want to make sure that they're still competitive too. I mean, that was one of the other factors that we looked at.
- John Burnam asked a question in the chat: So, we aren't in the red because we just aren't doing all of the original upgrades (i.e. the seven canceled projects), correct?
- Yvonne Little said it's a combination. We were more than \$400 million over. But through the strategic process that we took every project through -- every single project in Bond 2020 had adjustments from its original scope list. Again, we tried



to look at materiality and constructability first before lopping off anything, so it was a combination of both strategic planning of the project and then the last bit of the deficit, which was the \$188 million came from what was alleviated from the Rightsizing projects.

- Board President Martinez asked did some of the costs come down just because originally when we costed out inflation was spiking some of the prices and so waiting brought some of the prices down?
- Yvonne Little said absolutely. We came to the board in October or November 2022. That really was at the peak height of what we were seeing in the construction market. So, utilizing that strategic plan of phasing the projects - and even within Phase 2, we just got Brackenridge under GMP because what we were seeing with the type of material that we needed for the scope that we were doing...Everyone wakes up in the morning and says, what's the sun looking like today? I'm like, what's steel doing this morning? Looking at those things, watching those commodities constantly to see what they're doing out in the market is something that we took into consideration and adjusted our timelines to accommodate.
- A couple of members commended the team for the work they are doing on the bond.
- Pat Jasso shared that she has been on several of these bonds, and she remembers how the members tried to make everybody feel good by saying, 'Oh, we're touching your school, we're touching your school,' and we do a piece meal, sometimes fast kind of job where I would like to see that we finish a school soup to nuts.
- Jenny Arredondo mentioned the facility condition assessment. Yvonne Little said it is not cheap to do an FCA. It takes engineers of all different disciplines on campuses. Our team is escorting them, opening doors, opening different nooks and crannies of the campus so that we can get that raw data. Typically, when you bond plan, you have that. We did have a version of it. We had a 2030 master plan, but it was pretty much based on age, not specific system and infrastructure need. Now we have this tool. I can tell you that a campus' facility conditions index is a 46 versus someone else being an 86. I can tell you this campus has a greater need which allows us to really spread and plan the work appropriately, so



you're not renovating a school that's a 40 or a 30 because the lower your score, the better you are.

- A member asked about Lowell and Kelly. She thought that Kelly was not closing completely. Yvonne Little explained that once we are done with the wing at Lowell, Kelly will close completely. She explained that from a strategic standpoint, it made more sense to move the kids to Lowell instead of the other way around because Lowell had the space for all the students and Kelly did not.
- The same member asked about Green Elementary.
- Yvonne Little said that Bonham Primary students will move into the Green campus. The bond dollars will go further because Green was in better condition than Burnet.
- Michelle Jimenez shared that the Advanced Learning Academy is an example of where the district is pausing to do it right, versus doing it quickly. At that campus there were exploratory conversations about bringing the 4th and 5th graders over from Fox Tech to ALA Euclid, and lots of conversations like how do we do that... versus just looking at the clock and saying well, let's just move forward, this is what we're going to do. And so, we're still in schematic design at that campus, but ultimately, we know if we go through this process, the outcome is going to be something that works for that community
- Robert Sipes mentioned that he noticed the Jefferson portables were going away. Yvonne Little confirmed and noted that we just received the Guaranteed Maximum Price for the Bond 2020 work. She said we're in the process of scrubbing it, so it is still in the blackout period, but we are on budget.
- Mr. Burnam asked if it is possible to get an FAQ or written breakdown of why the estimated costs for the 2020 bond were so far off the actual needs, and how we got everything back on track?
- Yvonne Little said that is something we can get together.
- Pam Carpenter said good point in comparison to outer districts, there are inherently much higher costs in working with aged and And working with aged building stock. The projects tend to be more costly, more complex, take longer and have more surprises.
- Yvonne Little cited CAST Med HS as an example of unforeseen conditions, which required a change order.



- Michelle Jimenez raised the question of whether the group would like to re-elect officers since it has been a while since it was created. The group agreed to re-elect officers. Michelle said she would add it to the agenda for the next meeting.
- The group discussed future meeting dates and location. It was shared that it was easier to get into this location than the Quincy location. Michelle said she would be in touch about Wednesday meeting dates.