

## News from Dripping Springs ISD

[www.dsisdtx.us](http://www.dsisdtx.us)

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### LONG-RANGE FACILITY PLANNING CONTINUES

The district's Long-Range Facility Planning Committee has been meeting since Oct. 9, 2017. Complete updates on the process of this group are available at: [www.dsisdtx.us/LRFPC](http://www.dsisdtx.us/LRFPC). Comments on these concepts or any aspect of long-range facility planning can be shared via email at: [facilityplanning@dsisdtx.us](mailto:facilityplanning@dsisdtx.us).

The following Nov. 13 letter from Superintendent Bruce Gearing shares an update on the group's process, including a new idea for the future of schools, which was introduced for discussion at the Nov. 13 meeting.

*Dear Staff, Parents and Community,*

*The district's Long-Range Facility Planning Committee was reconvened last month to assess the status of current facilities and identify potential new facilities and improvements to existing buildings to support the district's mission.*

*More than 100 community members, parents, faculty, and district administrators have been involved. This is an open committee and anyone may attend the meetings. Previous meetings have included presentations on topics such as: facilities assessment, demographic projections, district technology, transportation services, and bond capacity.*

*The Long-Range Facility Planning Committee meeting held on Nov. 13 included a discussion of long-term options for the district's facilities focusing on what schools and support facilities should look like 10 years into the future and how they will support our goal of personalized learning in the 2021 strategic plan.*

*The data from the most recent demographic study indicates the need to expand the current high school to 2,500 students by 2020 and build a fifth elementary school to open in 2021. One way of meeting these needs is to continue to build stand-alone elementary and middle schools in a traditional model. We also are looking at the options to replace the current Administration Building. I'll refer to this as Path #1.*

*At the Nov. 13 meeting, we introduced a different concept that is important to discuss. We asked the question: "What do we want learning to look like in Dripping Springs ISD?" If we want learning to be more collaborative, with shared ownership of students, flexible environments, and an adaptable building, then we should consider a shift in thinking. The LRFPC then discussed an option of taking the design of Sycamore Springs Elementary and Middle Schools and*

*improving it. In other words, is it possible to replicate the model of attaching an elementary school to a middle school at other sites in the district?*

*With this concept in mind, we laid out a path that presents different possibilities for future buildings than those included in previous conversations. In what we'll call Path #2, we would consider converting Dripping Springs Middle School from a 1,200-student middle school to a combined 850-student middle school and 850-student elementary school. If we considered the possibility of relocating Walnut Springs Elementary to this location, we could use that vacated campus as an Administration Building rather than spending funds on a new facility. This model also would include expansion of the high school to accommodate 2,500 students, as was also discussed in Path #1.*

*Both of these potential "paths" indicate the need not only for a possible bond in May 2018, but also for future facilities over the next 8-10 years. You can view a narrated video that shares information about these two "paths" or options. Please understand that these are ideas for discussion. I also recognize that there may be other paths that have not yet been introduced. We will consider all options before we determine how we should move forward and we welcome input and feedback. Please send your thoughts to us at [facilityplanning@dsisdtx.us](mailto:facilityplanning@dsisdtx.us). We also are planning a community meeting to share information and updates on the planning process, and gather feedback from stakeholders on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2017, at 5:30 p.m., in the DSHS Cafeteria (there are a few events that evening so we are trying to start early).*

*Finally, I would like to clarify the school district's role in the City's TIRZ (Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone)/proposed Town Center. We have agreed to work with the City of Dripping Springs to explore the possibility of a central Town Center that would include facilities for the City, DSISD, Hays County, and the Community Library. We would not be a financial partner, but our participation would be critical because district-owned property would be a key component of the project. This concept is in the exploratory stage and as the land owner, we would have to approve any final plans. The TIRZ would not pay for a new DSISD Administration Building, but would be able to pay for some related costs such as roads and utilities infrastructure. The district also could benefit from the potential land lease.*

*We are listening carefully to feedback and ultimately will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees based on the discussions and planning resulting from the long-range facilities planning process.*

*General information on long-range planning, meetings, and reports/presentations are available on LRFPC website; go to district homepage ([www.dsisdtx.us](http://www.dsisdtx.us)), scroll to bottom of page, see "Quick Link" or just type in: [www.dsisdtx.us/LRFPC](http://www.dsisdtx.us/LRFPC).*

*Thank you for your strong support of public schools in Dripping Springs. We look forward to building the future together.*

*Sincerely,*

*Bruce Gearing, Superintendent*