

Board Briefs

The Board of Education Brookwood School District 167

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A Word from the Board President

In recent months the Board of Education has made significant decisions regarding improvements to the schools in the district and the future of Brookwood Middle School. These decisions are the result of many discussions and consideration of different options to improve the learning environment at Brookwood Middle School.

These decisions will benefit all students for many years to come. This project will cost approximately \$8 million, \$1.7 million for improvements to all of the buildings and \$6.3 million for an addi-

tion to Brookwood Junior High School that will include a large gymnasium and additional classrooms.

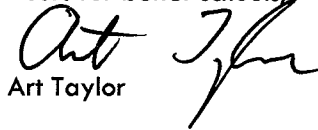
We know that these are tough economic times. The Board reviewed different options that take into account the current economic crisis and the district's declining enrollment. One of the options was to build a new middle school but this option would increase taxes.

As a result of these discussions, the Board has decided that closing Brookwood Middle School, housing fifth

graders at Longwood and Hickory Bend, and housing sixth graders at the junior high school presents the best scenario to improve the learning environment for all students *without* raising taxes. Class size will not change as a result of the reorganization of the school district.

A hearing has been set for February 14 at 7:30 p.m. regarding the sale of bonds for these building projects.

Yours for better schools,


Art Taylor

The Board Takes Action

At the November 2010 meeting the Board of Education took action regarding the improvement of the district's facilities. The Ten Year Life Safety Survey, which is a review of the school buildings and administration center, was presented to the Board by

Mario Planera, Architect, at a special meeting in October. The Survey outlines improvements to all five buildings. Almost \$4 million dollars of improvements were recommended for Brookwood Middle School. These improvements would not bring the school up to the

level of the other buildings in the district.

There are three timelines in the survey. Timeline A includes items that must be completed in the next twelve months; Timeline B includes items that must be completed within the next five years; Timeline

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Points of Interest:

- Closing Brookwood Middle School in August 2012
- Fifth graders will remain at Longwood Elementary and Hickory Bend School at the start of the 2012-2013 school year.
- Sixth graders will attend Brookwood Junior High at the start of the 2012-2013 school year.
- An addition to Brookwood Junior High School will include a gymnasium and additional classrooms.
- Building improvement projects will enhance the learning environment at Brookwood Junior High, Longwood Elementary and Hickory Bend School.
- Class size will not change as a result of the reorganization of the school district.
- No tax increase.

**The Board of Education
Brookwood School District 167**

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FAQS

Mission Statement:
Brookwood School District 167, in partnership with parents and community, will create a caring environment in which all students learn. This partnership shall empower all students to become responsible learners and decision makers as they prepare for the future.

The Board Takes Action (continued)

C is a list of items that will need to be considered at some point in the future. At the November meeting, the Board approved the recommendation to complete all of the items listed in the A, B, and C Timelines for Brookwood Junior High School, Longwood School, and Hickory Bend School. Items listed in Timeline A will be completed at the District Office and Brookwood Middle School. Some repairs at the middle school must be taken care of as students will attend school there until June 2012.

The Board has made the

decision to close Brookwood Middle School because of the expense of the recommended improvements to the building. These improvements would not bring the building up to par with the other schools in the district.

The Board accepted the recommendation to house fifth grade students at Longwood and Hickory Bend and sixth grade students at Brookwood Junior High School beginning with the 2012-2013 school year.

An addition to Brookwood Junior High that

will include a new competition gymnasium and additional classrooms was also approved. The new gymnasium will allow the school district to host competitions and tournaments within its conference and expand the physical education program. The gym will also be available to community groups.

Brookwood Middle School will be closed at the start of the 2012-2013 school year. The Board has not made a decision regarding future use of the middle school or its demolition.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why didn't the Board of Education decide to build a new middle school? Building a new middle school would raise taxes. With the decrease in the number of students attending school it is possible to keep fifth graders at their elementary buildings for an additional year and send sixth graders to the junior high school. Sixth graders will benefit from the rich extra-curricular program at the junior high school. The new addition will not raise taxes.

Why is the board spending money to improve the middle school when it will be closed in August 2012? Students will still attend school until June 2012. By law some of the projects

must be completed within the next 12 months.

How will the reorganization affect class size across the district? Class size will not change. This year class size is approximately 21 students per class. The projected class size for the next few years is the same.

Will the school district still have healthy cash reserves to weather the current economic crisis? Yes. The district has approximately \$14.5 million in cash reserves. This project will have a minimal impact on cash reserves.

Will the district have an excessive amount of debt because of the new bonds? Issuance of bonds is like taking out a loan on a home. School districts, just like a homeowner, have limited borrowing power and may take up to 20 years to repay a loan. This project will not deplete the district's ability to borrow money and will take 7-8 years to repay. The district still has the ability to borrow additional funds for other projects should it be necessary to do so.