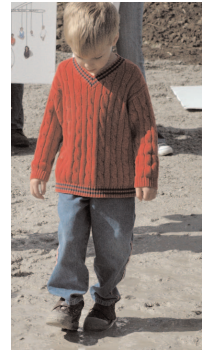


PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE CAPITAL PROJECTS AND SINKING FUND MILLAGE PROPOSAL



Board of Education and community members, attend the ground breaking for the new high school



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Building for the Future

PHASE I

Following voter approval of the millage and sinking fund proposals in June of 2004, Ann Arbor Public Schools embarked on more than a dozen construction and renovation projects with the goal of providing every student – at every grade level – with an optimal learning environment. To help keep parents, students and other stakeholders informed, this issue of A to Z includes brief progress reports on all Phase I building projects (those with completion dates of 2007 or earlier).

A Strong Start For Ann Arbor's New High School

Long before the official groundbreaking ceremony on April 25, architects, engineers and environmental planners were hard at work on schematics and schedules for the new 375,000 square foot high school on North Maple Road. Creating an eco-friendly facility has been a top priority from the very beginning. That commitment to environmental design has governed the choice of building materials and products, many of which are being sourced from manufacturers within a 100-mile radius of the school.

Given the school district's environmental focus, it was only natural that, when salamanders were discovered on the construction path early this spring, AAPS planners worked closely with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to construct a new home for the small creatures – relocating an athletic field in the process. In addition to sheltering

local amphibians, the new frog pond will be used as an educational site. Another example of eco-friendly design involves storm water runoff, which is typically diverted to storm drains and catch basins that end up in the Huron River, with resulting damage to the surrounding eco-system. To avoid that problem, AAPS Environmental Director, Randy Trent, coordinated efforts to mitigate and retain storm water, thereby protecting the existing microclimate.

By early July, AAPS had issued bids for site grading plans and completed the process of clearing land. According to Bond Project Director Julianne Chard, the project is on target for an August 2007 move-in date.

KEY ELEMENTS of the new comprehensive high school:

- Projected enrollment of 1,600 students
- Smaller learning communities featuring multi-use specialty classrooms
- Four "magnet school" spaces on each floor, dedicated to specific areas of academic focus
- Performing arts theater and support spaces
- Business and marketing instructional space
- Technology-rich media center
- Competition gymnasium with full support facilities
- Food court/student commons
- Administrative center
- Maintenance and operations area
- Full contingent of outdoor physical and athletic venues
- Space for faculty planning, counseling and specialized programs

Expanding Pre-K through 8th Grade Learning



Finalizing Plans for Preschool Facilities

After conducting district-wide surveys and meeting with focus groups in February and March, 2004, AAPS architects have produced a comprehensive plan for early childhood facilities—designed to meet the community's current and future needs. Key elements of the plan include:

- Full-day, tuition-based kindergarten that provides a half-day enrichment program with the same teacher.
- Expansion of tuition-based preschool to seven elementary schools: Allen, Dicken, Lakewood, Mitchell, Northside, Thurston, and Wines.
- A separate new preschool/early childhood center at the current site of the Balas II and III administration buildings. The new facility will integrate Head Start, Michigan School Readiness, Early Childhood Developmentally Delayed (ECDD), Young 5's, and First Steps Washtenaw programs as well as federally mandated Early-On and Early Intervention services. It will also offer tuition-based preschool for children from 2-1/2 to 5 years of age.

Following a groundbreaking ceremony in August, the Balas II and III buildings will be completely renovated. The design calls for 14 classrooms, some supported by special learning areas, and two separate playground areas. In addition to a large lobby and welcome center, the facility will feature a "hearth-and-home" gathering area for parents and students designed to accommodate a wide range of academic and social activities.

Construction is scheduled to begin in September of this year, and the new early childhood facility is expected to begin welcoming students in January of 2007. Renovations and construction of new early childhood centers at Allen and Thurston elementary schools will begin this summer.

Full Speed Ahead at Scarlett

One of the largest and most far-reaching projects is underway at Scarlett Middle School. In addition to extensive technology upgrades (described on page three of this issue) and academic improvements aligned with the U.S. Department of Education Comprehensive School Reform Guidelines, the school is undergoing major renovations, among them:

- Infrastructure improvements (plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems) to reduce operating costs and improve the learning environment
- Structural changes in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Improvements to the central lobby/entrance
- A new Parent Center
- Classroom remodeling
- Courtyard renovations
- Accommodations for special needs students
- Enhancements to the multipurpose room (cafeteria/auditorium)
- New bleachers and stage floor
- Outdoor recreation and environmental discovery areas
- Remodeled locker rooms

The work is scheduled to take place over two summers (2005 and 2006). All projects are being carefully staged to assure minimal disruptions and to protect the health and well being of students, teachers and staff.

Changes at Allen, Haisley & Thurston: Anything But Elementary

Major changes will soon be underway at Allen, Haisley and Thurston Elementary Schools. In addition to mechanical and electrical upgrades, classroom renovations, site work and landscaping, and technology improvements, new early childhood education centers will be constructed at Allen and Thurston. Haisley and Thurston will also see the addition of new multi-purpose rooms.

To keep disruptions to a minimum, most renovations to classrooms and other school facilities will take place in the summer months. During the school year, building crews will focus on the additions (preschool and multi-purpose rooms) to the facilities.

All projects are being carefully staged to assure minimal disruptions and to protect the health and well being of students, teachers and staff.

Technology Transformation

Providing new computers, software, computer training, and repairs for 32 schools, for administrators and support staff, has always been a challenging task—to say the least. Even before voters approved the June 2004 bond proposal, which allocated \$20 million for technology upgrades, our Information Technology Department (ITD) professionals never had the luxury of a slow day. But for the past year, the ITD staff has been operating in a constant state of hyper-drive... with outstanding results.



Peter Ways, AAPS Administrator for Special Projects and chief coordinator of the implementation plan, notes that, "In crafting the upgrade proposal, our chief objective was to set a new technology standard for the entire district. We also wanted to create technology equity among all our schools, to provide every student with equal opportunity." Projects have been organized into four categories and prioritized as follows:

- (1) Staff ✓ Completed
- (2) Scarlett Middle School ✓ Completed
- (3) All elementary schools ✓ Completed
- (4) Middle and High Schools to be completed the end of the 2006-07 school year.

A Successful Rollout for Teachers and Staff

In January 2005, ITD staff members deployed 1,200 laptop computers to teachers, plus an additional 40 laptops to AAPS technical staff. In addition, every secretary was issued a new desktop computer. The response from teachers and staff alike has been extremely positive, and the rollout was praised as being one of the best organized projects ever. For teachers, the new laptops have become a portable, indispensable tool for everything from class presentations to attendance records, grades, and parent communication.

The Scarlett Initiative

One component of the bond proposal is focused on "recreating" Scarlett as a model middle school with advanced learning technology and one computer for each student. The phased implementation began in September of 2004, when 150 computers were deployed on laptop carts. In January, 450 more computers were added – all loaded with the same educational software. In addition to intensive training for teachers, special parent-and-child training sessions drew 98 percent of all Scarlett families.

Reaching Every Elementary School

During 7 incredibly busy weeks, 15-person teams from ITD removed old computers – many of them hand-me-down units from middle and high schools – and installed 2,500 brand new computers in all 21 elementary schools. Response to the installation and training was nothing short of phenomenal. As one veteran teacher exclaimed, "This is the best day of my career!"

Enhancing Every Classroom

Digital projectors have been installed in every classroom throughout the district. In addition, beginning in June of 2005, all school classrooms are being equipped with soundfield systems. Consisting of portable microphones for teachers and hand-held microphones for students, these sound-enhancing, voice-saving systems can also be hooked up to laptops and DVD players.

Improving Infrastructure

Thanks to recent technology enhancements, every AAPS school now has fiber-optic, high-speed connections as well as wireless internet connections. All servers and data storage systems have been replaced.

Future Plans

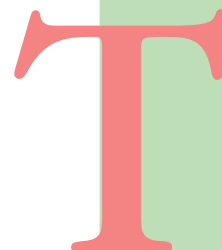
Between now and the end of the 2008 calendar year, ITD will complete the technology implementation by:

- Replacing individual software systems now being used in finance, human resources, student information services, and other departments with an integrated administrative software system.
- Continuing to train teachers and staff in the latest educational software.
- Updating all technology in the district's career and technical education labs.

GOALS AT A GLANCE

Among other things, the **TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE PLAN** calls for:

- New computer labs, digital cameras, color printers, and a scanner for every school.
- A ratio of one computer for every three students enrolled in AAPS.
- A new computer for every staff person: laptops for teachers and administrators and desktop computers for secretaries.
- New computers, a data projector, a shared printer, and a sound field system (used to amplify voices) for every classroom.
- A stronger web presence including improved access to grade information, schedules and assignments for parents, improved communication between home and school, and other online capabilities.





An architectural model of the new high school is on display at the main branch of the Ann Arbor Public Library.



As part of the 2004 Bond approval, approximately half of the district's musical instrument inventory will be replaced.

Coming Soon: PHASE II

Next summer, construction crews will descend on nine elementary, middle and high schools to begin classroom renovations and other projects. In future issues of A to Z, look for progress reports on:

- Bryant Elementary
- Lawton Elementary
- Mitchell Elementary
- Pittsfield Elementary
- Clague Middle School
- Slauson Middle School
- Huron High School
- Pioneer High School
- Stone High School

Also, for the latest updates on renovation and building projects, visit our web site at www.aaps.k12.mi.us

The Ann Arbor Public Schools is committed to:

- Putting the needs of students first in all decisions and actions
- Having high expectations for all students and staff
- Meeting students' educational and social needs
- Valuing and treating students as individuals
- Serving students, families, and the community in a professional manner
- Facilitating open, inclusive communication within the school and with the greater community
- Encouraging and supporting students to become responsible, independent life-long learners
- Providing equitable access to opportunities and resources for students
- Practicing mutual respect among students, staff, parents, and community members
- Welcoming parents' involvement in the education of their children
- Maintaining a safe and orderly school environment

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From **A to Z**
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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