

Bond Steering Committee
Carroll Independent School District

June 6, 2005



Interim Report to the Board of Trustees

Introduction

In action taken on November 15, 2004, the Board of Trustees authorized the creation of a Bond Steering Committee whose mission would be to “serve in an advisory capacity to the Board and Administration on a temporary basis in determining the needs and viability of a bond election.” To address that objective the district assembled a committee representing a broad cross section of the community. Representatives in this group included parents of students, citizens who had no children in school, teachers, students, administrators, business leaders, city government employees, and civic representatives. Since January 27, 2005, this large group of stakeholders has met a total of eleven (11) times in whole group sessions as well as numerous other occasions in smaller subcommittees. Those subcommittees addressed the following areas: capacity, capital improvements/maintenance, communication, instruction, safety/security, and technology. During the past few months they have examined an extensive volume of data, talked with various consultants, met with a variety of staff from across the district, visited campuses, and discussed reports from all of the subcommittees.

At this point the committee has developed a list of identified needs that we believe should be addressed through a bond election. Those needs focused primarily on four areas: instruction/technology, upgrades/maintenance, capacity expansion, and renovation. More specific information follows in the remainder of this report that details individual areas for each of the four broader categories. As for the viability of such an election, two items must be considered. First, the district’s capacity for bonded indebtedness must be considered. In that respect the committee has received information from our bond consultants that projects a possible capacity for as much as \$78 million without raising the current tax rate for indebtedness. Second, some determination must be made as to what voter response may be in reaction to possible proposals. At this juncture the group is not prepared to evaluate the viability of such an election. Therefore, committee members are suggesting that a period of community education and feedback be undertaken to determine where the district’s constituency stands on addressing the needs identified in this plan. In addition, the committee believes that a scientific survey conducted by a professional in that field would be essential to the Board in determining whether to proceed with propositions being placed before the people.

The pages which follow summarize the findings of the subcommittees created by the committee to complete the discovery work in this project. The committee wants to thank all of the parties who have provided information and feedback to them throughout this process.

Subcommittee on Capacity

Early in the committee process the administration shared with the overall committee a large volume of information about current and projected student demographics in the district. From this information the Subcommittee on Capacity determined that their focus should be on how to identify possibilities for expanding capacity in the district buildings that serve grades K-4, 5-6, and 9-10. In addition, the subcommittee agreed that the most pressing need was at the 9-10 high school campus. In a visit to Carroll High School the members of the committee heard from Principal Rick Westfall about needs at his location. From the data gathered, Chairperson Richard Sandow, reported back to the main body that within the next few years the campus would require additional capacity to meet its needs. The recommendation was to add ten classrooms to the south end of the building and to expand the facility in several other areas to meet the demands of a larger student body. The areas designated included the library, gymnasium, band hall, and student commons area. With a number of teachers already required to “float” and no real indoor environment in which students could congregate or meet in a formal setting these suggestions seemed appropriate.

In looking at the intermediate level, the group came to the conclusion that Carroll ISD was not large enough to warrant construction of another 5-6 campus. However, there is a constant pressure on the capacity of the buildings now in service. Recognizing that most of that stress appears to be ongoing at Eubanks Intermediate School, the subcommittee arranged a visit to the campus. Principal Mark Terry explained the modifications that had been made at his site to accommodate the current student body. In particular, he pointed to the loss of rooms designed for specific subject areas that had been lost to regular class room designations. For example, one of the computer labs has been dismantled to make way for a regular class as has a science lab. In addition, the former teacher’s lounge is now used as a special education room. As a result, the subcommittee proposed adding capacity at Eubanks in the form of eight (8) classrooms at the south end of the building. Durham Intermediate would remain as it is with enough space to accommodate the growth that appears destined for the area north of SH 114.

Three sites play into the possibilities to expand capacity at the K-4 level. One could involve Old Union Elementary School where a proven potential exists for an additional ten (10) classrooms similar to the expansion project that was completed several years ago at Rockenbaugh Elementary School. A second project could address growth north of SH 114 with a four (4) room addition at Johnson Elementary School. The third part of the scenario at K-4 involves former Carroll Intermediate School. While no K-4 rooms would be anticipated here, the effect of creating an Early Childhood Center on this campus could have the same impact. Such a center would house preschool classes that are currently occupying space on several of the elementary campuses. By moving them all to a central location the district could relieve some pressure that currently exists at elementary sites. If the district completes these projects, the committee believes that concerns about capacity would be resolved far out into the future.

Subcommittee on Capital Improvements/Maintenance

Early in the process the administration shared with the overall committee a large volume of information concerning capital improvements and maintenance needs throughout the district. In addition to the capacity needs already cited, the Subcommittee on Capital Improvements/Maintenance explored a wide variety of projects that would address cyclical needs as well as system upgrades along with the replacement of our transportation fleet.

Huckabee Architects joined our efforts early in the spring to assist the Bond Steering Committee in determining the condition of the current facilities, needed improvements, and other maintenance issues. They have provided the cost estimates for most of the capital improvement projects. Todd Thompson, CISD's Director of Maintenance, discussed the 1999 Bond Maintenance Projects and anticipated Maintenance Projects for 2005-2010. Mr. Thompson gave us a very comprehensive update on major proposed roofing projects, HVAC projects, lighting retrofits, and electrical service upgrades (for technology improvements). He also discussed other needed maintenance issues such as new kitchen equipment at most of the schools, fire alarm and sprinkler systems, science lab eye-wash stations, etc. The majority of his input was the result of his knowledge of the property and discussions with principals and staff at the various schools. As before the committee relied on Huckabee Architects to determine the approximate costs for these maintenance projects.

Steve Bond, CISD's Director of Transportation, provided the full Bond Steering Committee a detailed analysis of CISD's aging school bus fleet. The average age of the bus fleet is 9 years while the maintenance fleet is 11 years. Mr. Bond determined that CISD needed to replace approximately 54 buses between now and 2010 not only to handle the normal aging of the fleet but also to address certain safety concerns with the buses due age, lack of roof hatches, side windows, etc. Mr. Bond recommended replacing gas buses with diesel buses because of the following advantages: (1) a four (4) year longer life expectancy, (2) 8-9 MPG (miles per gallon) vs. 3-5 MPG, and (3) lower maintenance requirements. Switching to a diesel fleet could save CISD substantial dollars in annual fuel costs. In addition, for security and safety purposes, the new buses would be equipped with Digital Video Systems. In addition, Mr. Bond addressed the issue of air-conditioned versus non air-conditioned buses. The estimated cost of an air conditioned 77 passenger diesel bus is \$72,807 versus a non-air conditioned 77 passenger diesel bus at \$65,307, or a difference of \$7,500. Assuming that buses last 14 years, the cost for an air conditioned bus would be only a few dollars per day. In addition, air conditioned buses could substantially reduce CISD's dependence on using charter buses for athletic and academic contests. An additional amount would be needed to replace maintenance vehicles.

While the district's needs in maintenance are not of an emergency nature, the committee believes that a systematic program that focuses on addressing issues on a regular basis saves dollars over an extended period of time.

Subcommittee on Communications

The Communications Subcommittee's main responsibility is to communicate the needs as identified by the full Bond Steering Committee and to determine viability by collecting community input. The subcommittee has met on several occasions to discuss ongoing communication of bond steering work. In a presentation to the full committee, the communications subcommittee outlined four stages of this process:

- **Stage 1 - Identify School Needs (Interim Report Complete end of May 2005)**
- **Stage 2 – Communicate Needs to Public (On-Going from January 2005 to Date)**
- **Stage 3 – Collect Input from Various Sources (Survey Process/Town Hall Meeting)**
- **Stage 4 - Determine Viability of Election (Review Results of Survey)**

Communication to Date

Copies of communications are being provided to the Board of Trustees along with all media coverage to date.

- Extensive website – coverage includes all meeting handouts/presentations
- Press Releases – sent to all newspapers and posted to CISD website
- Online Newsletter – sent to subscribers and posted to CISD website
- The Carroll Connection – mailed to all residential and commercial taxpayers in CISD

Looking Ahead

To date, the subcommittee has concentrated its communications on the reports and discussion of the Bond Steering Committee. From this day forward, the communication must saturate the public with more details of the district needs to ensure that the voting community is aware of all the projects and their projected costs. Stage 2 communications will continue throughout the summer and increase greatly at the start of the 2005-2006 school year with public presentations, bond steering brochures, district publications and additional information on the CISD website. Ultimately, we must collect Stage 3 input via written feedback, a scientific telephone survey and face-to-face public meetings in order to determine Stage 4 viability. Either a Survey and/or a Town Hall meeting is recommended to determine viability of an election.

The Communications Subcommittee will present the community feedback results to the full Bond Steering Committee prior to the group's Final Recommendation to the Board of Trustees this fall.

Subcommittee on Instruction

The Subcommittee on Instruction began its work by meeting with the Department of Instructional Services to discuss district wide needs. Several primary areas of focus emerged from this discussion, the need for an Instructional Management System (IMS), concerns over compliance in some of our secondary science labs, staff development issues, and needs for special education.

An IMS would be wed to the appropriate technology and could allow the teachers of CISD to have many resources at their disposal without ever having to leave the classroom. Such a system should be able to provide real time information on testing data for all students both individually and collectively. It should allow teachers to access standards to which they are teaching while at the same time generating resources that would assist them in that process. Such resources would include but not be limited to sample lesson plans, pertinent websites, online subscription services, possible testing scenarios, and other curriculum materials. In addition, an IMS would bring much greater efficiency to some of our record keeping in regard to the evaluation process. Principals would be able to see teacher lesson plans online and offer feedback in a real time environment. Teachers could maintain up to date transcripts of their professional development experiences and staff could schedule and catalog opportunities in this area. In short, an IMS would provide tools of empowerment that would make an outstanding teaching staff even better.

The committee has recommended that the science lab issues be addressed in the work of the capital improvements/maintenance subcommittee and it is our understanding that this will be done.

Under the heading of staff development some of the needs expressed can be addressed with a full functioning IMS, specifically the issues dealing with record keeping and scheduling. The need for staff development space, however, will require special attention. Should the Board decide to maintain a presence at the former Carroll Intermediate School, portions of that site are suitable to be modified for that purpose. If not, some other site, either new or renovated, must be made suitable for this purpose.

Many of the special education needs expressed may be solved by the implementation of new administrative software due to be selected over this summer. These would include items that deal with tracking and reporting the extensive information maintained about each special education student in the district. However, the committee did request that staff review needs in assistive technology and include those requests in possible projects. This has been done.

In further discussions with district staff the subcommittee members identified another instructional need that centered on deficiencies in some libraries in the district. As a result the committee is also recommending that needs in the inventory of books and space for several libraries be fully identified and that these needs be addressed.

Subcommittee on Safety and Security

The Safety and Security Sub-committee was given the task to review the security and safety needs of the district. Research included meetings with the sub-committee, Officer Smith of the Southlake DPS, an official of the Southlake building department, the bond steering committee, and a survey given to all CISD building principals. The conclusion was that the best course of action to meet the districts needs, would be a key-less entry system and a monitored camera security system.

The committee focused on three major goals:

1. Student/faculty safety.
2. Protection of property.
3. Management of facility usage.

Student/faculty safety

In today's world, monitoring of our schools is a must. From our investigation schools in CISD do not have a satisfactory system of observing people from outside our system who are entering and leaving our buildings on a regular basis. Also, many of our teachers work in their rooms at different times of the day and night. Their security is important to us. Of the greatest concern would be of a missing child. With no monitoring of the building an important tool would not be available and precious time could be lost in the search for a missing student.

Protection of Property

A planned camera system for our buildings could:

- Prevent crime. Knowing the building has a camera system will stop much crime before it takes place. Our district would save thousands of dollars from the prevention of break-in and acts of vandalism.
- Allow us to identify individuals who may be in the buildings and know what they are doing anytime of the day and night.
- Enable police to pull information and pictures from the monitoring system from their squad cars.
- Will help to detect rule violations.
- Position the system to work with the city in integrating with the DPS for 24/7 monitoring.

Management of Facility Usage

A Keyless entry system (recommended for all doors outside and inside of buildings) could:

- Control of who has access to our buildings with a greater degree of accuracy.
- Enable the district to know who and when someone has accessed a building.
- Provide better control over what part of the buildings people are able to occupy.
- Remove concerns over lost or stolen keys. These could be simply disabled.
- Improve teacher moral by not having them go through the process of turning in their keys at the end of each school year.

Subcommittee on Technology

The Technology Subcommittee of the Bond Steering Committee met many times from January through May, 2005. We met with department heads from several schools to assess the needs of the various sites. Since we noticed that several of the elementary campuses had very good technology while the upper campuses had very poor technology, our primary concern became developing a plan to establish equity between the schools. The goal was to address both student computing and teacher computing.

The Technology Committee of the School Board published a study in 2004 entitled “Long-Range Technology Plan 2004-2007” that proposed various technology solutions for all CISD campuses. An essential element of their recommendation was the upgrading of all classrooms across the district to a “Model Technology Classroom” concept. In our deliberations, we discussed the Model Classroom and whether or not that was the idea that we wanted to propose to the Board. Ultimately, we decided to modify this concept based upon grade level. For the younger grades, we propose having desktop computers in the room while in the older grades, we propose having wireless mobile labs that the teachers could use. We found that most of the secondary teachers wanted to have one-on-one computing with their students but not every day. Also, in the older grades, the classrooms just do not have the space to handle desktop computers.

We also realized during the preparation for this that the Senior High and the High School have the oldest computers. We heard many complaints from teachers who could not check their email or receive files from other teachers and that students could not use the internet in a timely manner. In addition, computers at these two sites are breaking down with more regularity. Our proposal envisions starting the replacements of hardware at the Senior High level and working down to the younger grades.

Since we felt that we did not want to get too far behind the technology curve in the future, we thought it prudent to incorporate a technology refresh in this bond election in order to extend the life cycle of our technology and avoid another bond election for technology in a few years.

Additionally, we hope to relieve some pressure from the Maintenance and Operations budget by proposing a strategy for capitalizing the cost of many of the items that are used across the campus that have a finite shelf life. In particular, we are proposing the purchase of a multi-year supply of toner cartridges with each printer instead of the normal limited life cartridge that comes with new equipment. We are still waiting for the response from the bond attorney as to whether or not this can be done.