



HIGHLAND VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION
NOTES ON EXPANSION MEETING

Wednesday, March 4, 2020
HVES MEDIA CENTER

Who: **Seth Adams** of the [MCPS Department of Facilities Management](#) spoke to parents about a new proposal to expand Highland View Elementary School (HVES). This plan will be discussed at the Thursday, March 5th Board of Education (BOE) Meeting.

Highlights of the discussion:

Background

- For five years, there has been a discussion about expansion at Silver Spring International Middle School (SSIMS), which is co-located in the same building with Sligo Creek Elementary School (SCES). As MCPS has begun the renovation at SSIMS and is exploring options for renovating SCES, they have discovered logistical challenges that made MCPS rethink the project and consider moving SCES so that SSIMS can occupy the whole building.
- MCPS is proposing to accommodate some of the SCES students at an expanded HVES, and some at a re-opened Parkside Elementary, which is the North Hills neighborhood and within the current SCES catchment area. MCPS closed Parkside as an elementary school in the 1980s, and county parks staff have occupied the building since that time. The county parks staff are moving out to a new facility in Wheaton, so the building will now be available to use as a school again.
- Due to the limitations of the Parkside site, it is not possible to renovate it to accommodate all current SCES students without significant environmental impacts. Therefore, MCPS looked to adjacent schools and realized that given the needs at HVES, there was a unique opportunity to group these projects and meet multiple needs at the same time.
- MCPS believes the cost of renovating all three schools in this way would be less than the total cost of renovating SSIMS/SCES, if SCES were to

remain part of the SSIMS building. As a result, the requested FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) would be amended such that the project scope and budget for the SSIMS/SCES project would also encompass funding for an addition to HVES.

- HVES has been under consideration for an upgrade for a decade. It was originally built as a school for 288 students, but has outgrown the space and now has more than 400 students. Elementary schools in Montgomery County are currently built for a standard enrollment size of 740 students, given growth projections.

Timeline

- The BOE public hearing on March 5 is around this amendment, and will also include discussion of several other capital projects elsewhere in the county.
- The BOE will vote on whether to modify the scope of the SSIMS/SCES project to include the expansion of HVES and the move of SCES to the Parkside location.
- Once the BOE makes the decision, the next step in the process is for the Montgomery County Council to approve as part of their CIP approval in April.
- After County Council approval, the design would begin immediately and the entire project is expected to be completed by 2023. The design phase of the project would take 18 months, and the construction phase of the project would take 18 months.
- There is a one-year delay in SSIMS construction, but the delay is not related to the discussion here.

Logistics

- Half of SCES is a French immersion program and the other half is students from the base service area.
- To determine which students would attend SCES and an expanded HVES, there may be a boundary study or all or a portion of the French immersion program might come to HVES, or a combination of the two. The BOE will **not** decide this tomorrow. This would be decided at a later date after consultations with curriculum experts and demographers.
- Mr. Adams noted that the demographics of both schools are similar enough that shifting some students from SCES to HVES should not automatically lead to HVES losing MCPS focus school status. However, he noted that focus school status can always change based on a variety of factors. He also noted that larger schools do not equal larger class sizes and that larger schools receive more resources than smaller schools.

- Mrs. Adams said core spaces in addition to classrooms would be addressed in an HVES expansion, and that safety improvements “would be a priority.”
- PTA President Taylor Stager stressed that an addition must modernize the facilities and include a thorough review of the site configuration, not just expand the school.
- Mr. Adams said they would not seek to move students offsite during construction, unless it is later discovered that this is unworkable or if parents and school staff advocate for such a move.
- Parents emphasized that the current neighborhood configuration, including narrow streets with no sidewalks, would need to be considered and that the county should strongly consider sidewalks and other measures to accommodate increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic at an expanded HVES.

Community engagement/other

- Several parents and PTA leadership noted that this plan and the timeline for a decision came on short notice and stressed the need for community engagement.
- Mr. Adams said there would be more time for community input after Thursday and throughout the design and construction process, if approved. A parent requested a timeline to make sure community engagement is tracking with decisions.
- A new HVAC system for Highland View is still planned for the summer.
- Because of constrained Montgomery County budgets, other big construction projects may be delayed, and this includes the long-awaited Northwood High School project.

Resources

BOE meetings can be watched live here:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe/meetings/live.aspx>

SSIMS/SCES Construction information can be found here:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/construction/project/ssims.aspx>