

A. Education Capital Study Workgroup Update

Background

- ❑ 2022- Original scope of work for RHS, RMS and BHS exceeds funding availability. First pass at reduced scope of work would have required removal of some renovation including roof concerns as raised with photos in news media.
- ❑ 2023- Collaborative Effort Begins- both Boards agree there is critical work to be done to fix school facilities.
 - ❑ Board of Education and Board of Commissioners agree to form a working study group to comprise the manager, superintendent, a retired manager and retired superintendent. First step was to contract for a maintenance reserve study to inform the process. Assessment by Axias scheduled for summer to avoid impacts to instructional time.
 - ❑ Summer 2023- New superintendent Lisa Fletcher appointed by BOE.
 - ❑ Summer 2023- Maintenance Reserve Study Site Visits systemwide

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- ❑ Sept 2023- Work group meets with Axias to begin review of results from maintenance reserve study (building assessment)
- ❑ Oct 2023- Work group meets to continue review of results and discuss the need to update safety assessment for system to inform capital project funds needed to address safety
- ❑ Oct 2023- Concerns regarding mold at BHS raised by students in Board of Commission meeting. BOC authorizes testing at schools to evaluate and inform the work of the study group.
- ❑ Nov 2023- contracts established for Safe Haven for safety assessment and mold testing
- ❑ Dec 2023- system wide mold testing onsite and recommendations prepared
- ❑ Dec 2023- Bond consultants engaged for financial planning confirmation

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- ❑ Dec 2023- Safe Haven (Nationally Recognized) conducts onsite assessment. Assessor praised the collaboration of Board of Commissioners, Board of Education and Sheriff's Office on the SRO program in place since 1998 on his blog:
 - ❑ *"I've visited and assessed hundreds of schools, across this country. This little town in western North Carolina should be the model for school districts across the country. The police, especially trained SROs, are not the enemy. They should not be de-funded. They should be fully funded and supported. Lieutenant Greg Stroup, God bless you and your SROs!"*
- ❑ Dec 2023- Concern sent from parent to County Building Inspections Department regarding BHS structural beams. Re-engaged structural engineer to assess repair from last assessment and current status. Site visit late December.

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Current Status

- ❑ The need to be responsive to concerns raised in the process has slowed down work from original timeline, but this has been necessary to make sure that the work group has complete information to develop actionable options for the board's consideration.
- ❑ Results from Safety Assessment are still pending- update with Safe Haven scheduled next week
- ❑ Structural results are pending
- ❑ Mold test information complete and sent to Axias
- ❑ TCS staff has provided some additional information based on currently funded project work on building needs sent to Axias
- ❑ Work group is unified that the buildings are worthy of investment and have usable life. Most critical need appears to be roof replacements.
- ❑ Expecting to have solid project options for boards to consider and move forward.