

Hudson CSD Capital Project

Frequently Asked Questions

(Answered by Superintendent Maria Suttmeier and Board of Education members)

February 9, 2016

How is the \$10 million (from the "new" east wing of J.L. Edwards) recovered in a sale?

There is \$10.7 million worth of repairs and replacement items needed across the district as a result of the mandatory 5-year Building Conditions Survey—more than 50% of the entire cost of the Capital Project. The addition proposed for the south side of the M.C. Smith Intermediate School building to specifically accommodate the smallest children in the district—grade K-1—is estimated to be \$7.4 million of the project.

Equally important, who/what is in line to purchase the building that they were able to effectively alter our vote date? Maria allowed that their urgency to buy J.L. was why she moved the date up to the 9th. Who has such clout?

Selling John L. Edwards is not part of the vote today; therefore there is no one in line to purchase the JLE building at this time. It is the sale of the Claverack School that required a special referendum.

The buyers of the Claverack School will be opening an art gallery and wanted the referendum sooner. The district asked them to wait until we had the concept of a Capital Project so that we could hold two propositions at one time. A special referendum is costly.

The reason for the February date is twofold. First, the buyers are anxious to finalize the purchase after patiently waiting for the district to decide on a Capital Project. **If we wait until May we run the risk of losing this buyer.**

The second reason is that there is a narrow window to maximize use of the low interest rate available on renewing our expiring bonds and to maximize the state's building aid for the project. The window of opportunity to capture the retiring debt at a low rate is closing in March.

Also, as we heard from the audience during Dr. Suttmeier's presentation, there are concerns that John L.'s design is so specific to the "little buggers" (e.g., the height of the stair risers, cubbies, smaller bathroom facilities). Will the M.C. Smith addition address these issues?

John L. was originally designed for older students, and then retrofitted for little ones. The district is keeping the students in the forefront of all decisions related to safety and accommodating their specific needs.

The new areas to be built at MCSIS will be to scale for little learners, and all areas young children will use at MCSIS will be retrofitted to accommodate their needs.

And, (the children were out on the playground while we spoke), will these little ones have a secure arena for their out-of-doors time?

Yes. This is absolutely necessary and will be required within any designs to be approved by the Board of Education.

With the cooperation of the city, the district has plans to install a second secure playground for the littlest students in the district on the south side of the addition at the current M.C. Smith campus. If the city does not transfer property to the district, there will be another equally secure provision made on the district owned property.

I know my concern is still the way cars speed through the modest [one mile] school zone, often passing each other over the double yellow line. Where is the land to develop a play area at M.C. Smith?

As mentioned above, the playgrounds will be fully secure and safe and nowhere near Harry Howard Avenue; speaking of which, the City was awarded a grant to put sidewalks along most of that stretch.

The designs are still quite flexible at this point. Where the play areas are created will depend on whether the city and the district come to an agreement on the property beside the school. If the district acquires that land, the play area will most likely be beside the new wing. If not, it will likely be behind the wing.

If we are able to acquire the land beside the school, we will also be able to work on erosion there. Our hope is that cleaning up that area will make the woods more appropriate for children to explore (under proper supervision, of course).

I'll be there this morning for the "Hudson Reads" program and plan to do a walkabout. Already, I've seen how the basketball courts out back are tragic, gravel covered asphalt macadam slabs. I guess we should be grateful we've not been sued because of injury.

Point taken. We'll make sure that our Building and Grounds Director looks at that.

Agreed. I will bring this up at the next facilities committee meeting to see what is being done there. With new play areas at MCSIS some of this will be alleviated.

Typically, for Hudson, another move of *great* importance being shoved in front of us with not enough information, (except statistics from the perspective of educators). I wish I had more answers for my fellow taxpayers!

This sounds a bit harsh considering the many public meetings we have had on this project and the abundance of information provided on our website and in local papers. However, I totally understand that you can never communicate enough and applaud you for your concerns. I hope I've helped allay some of them.

Apologies that this feels as if it has been shoved in front of the voters. I do think we have tried to get as much information out as possible, with public meetings, columns by Dr. Suttmeier dedicated to the project in the Register Star since September, and the district website (<http://www.hudsoncityschooldistrict.com/>) has a lot of information. The Columbia Paper has had a few articles about the conversations, the Udells created a video about the project for us which was posted to the website. We addressed the Common Council about it, and Dr. Suttmeier has met with multiple groups who asked her to speak directly to them about the subject.

We sincerely appreciate all the help we get from every well-informed voter in the district. Thank you for your efforts! Hopefully these answers here will help as well.