

November 7, 2019

Dear Clarke County School District Community Members,

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on the progress of E-SPLOST V, the program that manages our capital projects funded by the one-penny sales tax.

It has been one year since the district released its Future Facilities Use Report, and there has been significant progress on many of the action items. Equally important has been stakeholder feedback on other action items. The following pages contain an update on some of the major projects. Note: This is not a complete list of the E-SPLOST V projects.

The BOE received an update on E-SPLOST V projects at the 11/7/19 BOE Work Session. The meeting agenda and supporting documents are available in [BoardDocs](#).

The Operations Department and E-SPLOST team will continue to provide regular updates to the BOE, and information posted to the district website. The CCSD website now contains updated information on E-SPLOST V, including:

- [2-page flyer on E-SPLOST](#)
- [Link to E-SPLOST V Monthly Report \(with Budget\) – November 2019](#)
- [Link to E-SPLOST V Update Presentation](#)
- [Link to 2016 E-SPLOST V Plan](#)

If you have additional questions regarding the status of E-SPLOST V projects or want to know how to be part of the planning process, please contact:

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Sincerely,

Demond A. Means

Superintendent

## PROJECT PROCESS

E-SPLOST projects are prioritized for completion based on facility reports, budget estimates, and stakeholder feedback. The CCSD E-SPLOST team collaborates with stakeholders to define and plan projects.

The E-SPLOST team will work to define the outstanding projects and provide an update to the E-SPLOST V Plan. Budget estimates (based on collection amounts) will determine what projects can be completed during the E-SPLOST V program period (ending December 2020).



## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### 1. Middle School Renovations – Burney-Harris-Lyons, Coile

In the 2016 E-SPLOST V Plan, BHL, Coile, and Clarke Middle schools were allocated \$10,000,000 for renovations. Renovations to Burney-Harris-Lyons and Coile were completed in March 2019. After working with the communities from each school and reviewing the academic programming needs, the original construction plans changed, and costs exceeded the projected budget. Final renovation costs were:

- BHL = \$17,000,000
- Coile = \$16,000,000

### 2. New Hilsman Middle School

Hilsman was originally slated for renovation and expansion, with a \$25,000,000 budget. After the planning process, it was determined renovations would not adequately meet the needs of the Hilsman community. A proposed new Hilsman Middle was approved with a \$25,000,000 budget and construction completed in September 2019. The final construction budget will be approximately \$28,000,000.

## APPROVED PROJECTS

### 1. West Broad Campus

This fall, the BOE approved preliminary plans to renovate the West Broad campus into an Office of Early Learning Center. Additionally, the campus will house a facility that will host a school-based health clinic, student success center, community meeting rooms, and a dedicated area to commemorate the history of education in Athens-Clarke County. We are pleased to advance early childhood education opportunities for our children – an established strategy to close achievement gaps for historically marginalized children. In the initial 2016 E-SPLOST V Plan, the renovation of the West Broad Campus was identified as a Tier 3 project.

#### Next Steps:

- The E-SPLOST team will begin working with architects and engaging stakeholders to define the project.

## OUTSTANDING PROJECTS

### 1. High School Athletics Facilities

Upgrading the athletic facilities has been identified as an important project by our athletic directors and principals, and a total of \$2,500,000 was allocated for this Tier 3 project in the initial 2016 E-SPLOST V Plan. We are excited to move this project forward to provide better facilities for our student-athletes, band programs, and community supporters.

#### Next Steps:

- This fall, the E-SPLOST team will start the planning process with the high school communities to collaborate and develop a vision for renovating high school athletic facilities.

### 1. Additions to Chase Street Elementary and Gaines Elementary

A total of \$5,000,000 was allocated to construct additions at Chase Street Elementary and Gaines Elementary. Currently, these schools are using portable classrooms to conduct core instruction. From a safety and instruction perspective, it is best to limit portable classrooms used for core instruction.

Other elementary schools will eventually need additions to limit portable classrooms and prevent redistricting. Additions for Whit Davis, Judia Jackson Harris, and Timothy Road schools will be presented as part of the E-SPLOST VI master plan.

#### Next Steps:

- This fall, the E-SPLOST team will start the planning process with the school communities to collaborate and develop a vision for renovating/additions to Chase and Gaines.

### 2. Whitehead Annex/Whitehead Elementary

A growing student population at Whitehead Elementary School dictates a need for additional space.

#### Next Steps:

- The district will plan to move staff located at the Whitehead Annex to the Old Gaines Elementary School site. Although the goal is to have the entire district staff housed in the same location, this will be a temporary solution until a decision is made concerning new district office space.

### 3. District Office Space

Originally, the district planned to use up to \$10,000,000 (reallocated from the renovation budget at CMS) to invest in a permanent district office. As previously mentioned, this decision was made because it was deemed a \$10,000,000 budget would not be sufficient to adequately renovate CMS.

#### Next Steps:

- The issue of budgeting for district office space will be addressed as part of the E-SPLOST VI program.

#### 4. Clarke Middle School – Originally Slated for Renovations

\$10,000,000 was originally allocated for renovations to CMS. However, the campus of CMS does not lend itself to a renovation project similar to those undertaken at BHL and Coile Middle.

The condition of CMS is such that a new building is likely. A budget of \$10,000,000 would not provide the funds needed for new construction (as evidenced by the Hilsman Middle School project).

A decision was made to reallocate the funds from the renovation project at CMS to go towards funds for a district office space. Unfortunately, the November 2019 Future Facilities Use Report did not explain this decision nor was the decision fully communicated to the CMS community. In retrospect, the entire school community should have been engaged in understanding the vision of the Future Facilities Use Report. The district will provide communication on the process and progress of all future projects.

The \$10,000,000 will not be used for a district office space and will continue to be allocated for use by CMS. The district agrees with community stakeholders that this funding is best suited for student learning instead of administrative space.

##### **Next Steps:**

- In November, the E-SPLOST team will begin the process to solicit feedback from all stakeholders on the needs of CMS and how to utilize the \$10,000,000 currently allocated.

NOTE: After collecting feedback and finalizing an updated facilities plan, the E-SPLOST team will provide a preliminary budget for the proposed solution. A discussion on financing the project will be required. If the community deems it necessary to build a new school, the Hilsman project will be used as a guide (with the approximately \$28,000,000 required to complete new construction).

In order to have funds available, the district would need to pause all other planned E-SPLOST V projects and wait for the collections to accrue (projected date would be 2020).

If new construction is required, this project could be planned for E-SPLOST VI (where the district could take out a bond to finance the construction of the school and pay back the bond with future E-SPLOST collections).