

August 29, 2017

Mr. Troy Ferguson, Superintendent
St. Francis Public Schools, ISD #15
4115 Ambassador Boulevard
St. Francis, MN 55070

Dear Superintendent Ferguson:

Minn. Stat. § 123B.71 requires a review and comment statement on the educational and economic advisability of your proposed school construction project. Information supplied by your school district and from Minnesota Department of Education sources is the basis of this review and comment. With this positive review and comment, voter and board approval is required in order for St. Francis Public Schools, ISD #15 to proceed with the proposed projects.

The district shall publish a summary of the review and comment statement (the final two pages) in the legal newspaper of the district at least 20 days, but not more than 60 days, prior to holding a referendum for bonds or soliciting any bids for the construction, expansion, or remodeling of an educational facility. The Department may request a statement certifying the publication, and require the submission, review, and approval of preliminary and final construction plans.

Minn. Stat. § 123B.71 requires the Commissioner include comments from residents of the school district in the review and comment. As of the date of this letter, no public comments have been received. In addition, Minn. Stat. § 123B.71 requires the school board hold a public meeting to discuss the review and comment prior to the date of the bond referendum election.

Minn. Stat. § 123B.72 requires that a school district, prior to occupying a new or renovated facility after July 1, 2002, must submit a certification prepared by a system inspector to the commissioner and the building code official that will provide an occupancy permit. The certification must verify that the facility's installed or modified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system operates according to design specifications and code, a system for monitoring outdoor airflow and total airflow of ventilation systems has been installed, and any installed or modified heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system provides an indoor air quality filtration system that meets ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Standard 52.1.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Kubesh, Education Finance Specialist, at (651) 582-8319 or chris.kubesh@state.mn.us. Thank you for working with us to improve school facilities for Minnesota students.

Sincerely,



Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Commissioner

cc: Mike Starr, School Board Chair

Enclosure

education.state.mn.us

**THE COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION
PROPOSAL OF ST. FRANCIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ISD #15**

A review and comment must be provided on a school district construction project proposal before the district conducts a referendum, solicits bids, or issues bonds for the project. A project proposal has been submitted for review and comment according to requirements set forth in Minn. Stat. § 123B.71, Subdivisions 9 and 10, and Minn. Stat. § 123B.72. The district provides the following information:

1. The geographic area and population to be served,
 - a. preschool through grade 12 student enrollment for the past five years, and
 - b. student enrollment projections for the next five years.

2. A list of existing school facilities
 - a. by year constructed,
 - b. their uses, and
 - c. an assessment of the extent to which alternate facilities are available within school district boundaries and in adjacent school districts.

3. A list of specific deficiencies of the facility
 - a. demonstrating the need for a new or renovated facility to be provided,
 - b. the process used to determine the deficiencies,
 - c. a list of those deficiencies that will and will not be addressed by the proposed projects,
 - d. a list of specific benefits that the new or renovated facility will provide to students, teachers, and community users served by the facility.

4. A description of the project including:
 - a. specifications of site and outdoor space acreage,
 - b. square footage allocations for classrooms, laboratories and support spaces,
 - c. estimated expenditures for major portions of the project,
 - d. estimated changes in facility operating costs,
 - e. dates the project will begin and be completed.

5. A specification of the source of project financing including:
 - a. applicable statutory citations,
 - b. the scheduled date for a bond issue or school board action,
 - c. a schedule of payments, including debt service equalization aid, and
 - d. the effect of a bond issue on local property taxes, by property class and valuation.

6. Documentation obligating the school district and contractors to comply with the following items:
 - a. section 471.345 governing municipal contracts,
 - b. sustainable design,
 - c. school facility commissioning under section 123B.72, certifying the plans and
 - d. designs for heating, ventilating, air conditioning and air filtration for an extensively
 - e. renovated or new facility meet or exceed current code standards, including ASHRAE air filtration standard 52.1 and
 - f. ANSI acoustical performance criteria, design requirements and guidelines for schools on maximum background noise levels and reverberation times,
 - g. State fire code,
 - h. chapter 326B governing building codes, and
 - i. consultation with affected government units about the impact of the project on utilities, roads, sewers, sidewalks, retention ponds, school bus and automobile traffic, access to mass transit and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

St. Francis Independent School District #15 is proposing a single question bond referendum on November 7, 2017 that would authorize \$80.06 million in bonding authority to finance districtwide deferred maintenance projects, facility/site upgrades and building additions. Cost estimates by building / project type are as follows:

East Bethel Elementary		Cedar Creek Elementary	
4 Classroom Addition	\$1,080,000	Secure Entrance	\$60,000
Secure Entrance	\$40,000	Site Improvements	\$260,000
Site Improvements	\$260,000	Media Center Upgrades	\$480,000
Media Center Upgrades	\$320,000	Special Education Space Ugrades	\$360,000
Special Education Space Ugrades	\$360,000	Deferred Maintenance	\$2,391,840
Deferred Maintenance	\$2,159,300	Renovations	\$1,115,000
Renovations	\$1,354,000	Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$886,699
Additional Restrooms	\$400,000	Contingency	\$298,678
Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$1,134,928		\$5,852,217
Contingency	\$382,291	St. Francis Middle School	
	\$7,490,519	Music Addition	\$960,000
St. Francis Elementary		Renovations	\$4,460,400
10 Classroom Addition	\$3,168,000	Site Improvements	\$750,000
Renovations	\$1,862,000	Cafeteria Expansion / Renovation	\$1,176,000
Secure Entrance	\$50,000	Secure Entrance	\$450,000
Site Improvements	\$140,000	Media Center Upgrades	\$555,000
Media Center Upgrades	\$240,000	Special Education Space Ugrades	\$560,000
Special Education Space Ugrades	\$240,000	Deferred Maintenance	\$5,506,215
Deferred Maintenance	\$2,533,025	Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$2,739,347
Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$1,564,275	Contingency	\$922,727
Contingency	\$526,914		\$18,079,689
	\$10,324,214	Crossroads	
St. Francis High School		Secure Entrance	\$150,000
Renovations	\$9,261,000	Site Improvements	\$30,000
ADA Upgrades	\$200,000	Renovations	\$650,000
Weight / Fitness Addition	\$960,000	Deferred Maintenance	\$548,130
Secure Entrance	\$1,140,000	Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$261,845
FF&E	\$300,000	Contingency	\$88,200
Site Improvements	\$280,000		\$1,728,175
Media Center Upgrades	\$720,000	Lifelong Learning Center	
Deferred Maintenance	\$8,595,675	Secure Entrance	\$50,000
Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$4,076,769	Renovations	\$1,253,000
Contingency	\$1,373,227	Site Improvements	\$20,000
	\$26,906,671	Deferred Maintenance	\$780,670
Districtwide		Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$399,698
Deferred Maintenance	\$615,446	Contingency	\$134,632
Maintenance building addition	\$225,000		\$2,638,000
Stadium / Field Upgrades	\$616,808		
FF&E	\$3,400,000		
Fees / Testing / Permits / Services	\$922,879		
Contingency	\$310,864		
Bond Issuance	\$949,518		
	\$7,040,515		

District officials expect a stable to slightly declining enrollment environment over the next five years. Though the district's general fund reserve has been below the state average over the last few years, existing revenues are expected to be sufficient to fund the operational cost increases associated with the proposed building additions.

If the bond referendum is successful and bonds are sold, the debt service on the bonds will be eligible for debt service equalization under Minn. Stat. § 123B.53, subd. 3, if the bond schedule is approved. The amount of debt service equalization aid, if any, the district receives is determined annually and is dependent upon property wealth, student population, and other statutory requirements.

The projects would be scheduled for completion in the 2018 – 2020 calendar years. The school board believes the proposed projects are in the best long term interest of the district.

REVIEW AND COMMENT STATEMENT

Based upon the department's analysis of the school district's required documentation and other pertinent information from sources of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education provides a positive review and comment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

Persons desiring additional information regarding this proposal should contact the school district superintendent's office.


Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Commissioner

August 29, 2017