

October 31, 2006

School Board Briefs:

District will utilize former HealthPartners facility from 2007-2010, Board to consider permanent use as District & Community Services Center



The District purchased the former HealthPartners building this past summer to help with space needs during 2007-2010 construction and renovation phases.

At an October 16 work session, the School Board received an update from architects on plans for the new elementary school and on renovations and additions to all district schools. Schematic drawings will be completed in the near future and made available to the public.

The Board also heard an update from Dr. Don Helmstetter, superintendent, on the "former HealthPartners site," 1415 81st Avenue NE, Spring Lake Park, that the District acquired this summer.

The District will utilize this site for the next 3-4 years to house district programs displaced by Facilities Improvement Plan renovation and construction projects.

The District may soon elect to occupy this site permanently due to the need to have non-high school services off of the Spring Lake Park High School site, the 20 percent growth in school district enrollments and programs, and the

scarcity of available space throughout the district.

The administration has recently asked the Board to consider keeping the "HealthPartners" site as a permanent District & Community Services Center.

Dr. Helmstetter summarized some of the considerations:

- Since the bond referendum was passed in February 2006, District 16 has been in the market for facilities to address short- and long-term space needs.

Between 2007 and 2010, during major demolition and construction phases at the high school complex, additional space is needed for (at least) the temporary relocation of Early Childhood programs (January 2007), the Community Services Department, the District Offices, and many of the district-wide student support services scattered throughout various facilities.

- A key component of the bond referendum was an agreement made with the Minnesota Department of Education that the District significantly reduce non-student activities from the high school complex, provide more parking, and offer more green space in accordance with state guidelines.

- To accomplish this need for space, and after looking at all available options, the District was able to purchase the former "HealthPartners" site for 2007-2010 transitional space during the demolition and construction on the high school complex.

- If the move to the "HealthPartners" facility were to become permanent, it would be established as a District & Community Services Center. Programs and services that support and benefit community members, students, parents, family, staff, and community could be centralized instead of scattered throughout various district facilities.

This support center would include:

- *Centralized school district welcome center, new family/student registration and enrollment*
 - *Community Services Department offices, registration and enrollment*
 - *Community meeting rooms*
 - *Teaching, Learning & Accountability Department*
 - *Business Services*
 - *Food Services*
 - *Human Resources*
 - *Transportation*
 - *Special Education*
 - *District administration*
 - *Professional Development Training Center*
 - *Title I Services*
 - *English Language Learners*
 - *School Board Chambers*
 - *District Psychologists, Occupational Therapists*
 - *Gifted Services*
 - *District-wide Technology and Technology Support Services*
- By permanently relocating student, staff, family, and community support services to the HealthPartners site, additional space would be available at the high school to allow for the growth of Learning Alternatives Community School programs as well as Special Education programs currently offered to our students off-campus.

■ The Special Education EBD Level IV programs currently out-sourced could be brought back to the district, resulting in better service to students, and a reduction in tuition and transportation expenditures.

■ Some of the space at “HealthPartners” that will be used as a temporary space for Early Childhood Programs could be modified for needed staff training space and community meeting rooms.

■ The area previously used for HealthPartners dental offices could be used as lease space to generate revenue for the District.

■ The District would have additional options for relocating the district’s Life Skills Transition program, which requires a house or “apartment” setting for real-life experiences for special needs students, eliminating the current cost of rental space.

■ Permanent relocation of student, family, and community support services to the “HealthPartners” site would allow the high school site to have an additional 24,000 square feet.

This would provide far more flexibility in creating a 2,000-student (including Spring Lake Park High School and Learning Alternatives Community School) capacity school.

■ The HealthPartners site would also provide space for the maintenance garage which must be relocated from its current site on the Spring Lake Park High School complex.

■ Dr. Helmstetter said that keeping the HealthPartners site as a permanent district facility would not result in an increased tax levy.

Dr. Helmstetter told Board members that they could expect a detailed presentation on the “HealthPartners” site at their November 14 regular meeting. A Board decision on how to utilize this space—on a short- or long-term basis—could occur at this meeting or at a subsequent meeting this fall.