

State of the District Address

February 21, 2020

Chamber of Commerce

Steve Quick, Superintendent

Thank you for allowing me to spend a few minutes to give a short state of the school district address today. It is a privilege to serve the district as the superintendent and I thank you for this opportunity.

Our official mission of the school district is to prepare contributing members of society while embracing our community's culture.

The district currently serves approximately 850 students in grades K-12: Approximately 400 at Slater elementary, and just over 200 each at Hines Middle School and Burns High school. The district employs 129 staff which includes teachers, administrators, specialists, food service staff, office staff, maintenance staff, bus drivers, classroom aides, and other support staff, in addition to several substitute employees who work when our regular staff are not available to serve our students.

The district continues to offer a wide variety of academic coursework that includes your basic Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Music, and PE courses as well as a wide variety of course electives, especially at the middle school and high school. Our district offers courses for the diverse group of students we have, with these opportunities ranging from college preparation courses to career and technical education courses to help align with our students' future goals and aspirations. In addition, students enjoy a host of athletic and club opportunities that are offered through the school. This past Fall the Burns High School Football team made it to the semi-finals in the state football playoffs, the volleyball team placed 6th at the state tournament, the girls cross country team took the state title, and the boys cross country team placed 2nd. In just over a week we will have 15 wrestlers at the state tournament while both our boys and girls basketball teams are playing this weekend in their league tournament for a chance to compete at the state tournament. Our students are very successful, both in and out of the classroom.

We are lucky to have highly dedicated staff who work hard day in and day out to give our students the support they need to prepare them to be contributing members of society.

Starting back in the winter of 2017 our district embarked on the process of creating a strategic plan and by the Fall of 2018 the plan had been developed with two main goals.

- 1) By June 2023, all students (K-12) will be on track to graduate and be prepared with a plan beyond high school
- 2) Optimize and build district facilities for students and expanding programs

I would like to expound on this second goal. In the Fall of 2018 we were able to acquire grants from the state to assess our facilities and create a long range plan. Based upon the findings, it was determined that improvements to facilities were needed. Last Spring we assembled a committee with the support of the board to develop a plan to address these needed improvements, which has led to the board passing a resolution to place a bond measure on the May 19th ballot to fund these improvements. Initial information about the plans were reviewed at the last board meeting and have been posted on our website.

The actual bond measure on the ballot is for \$8 million, which is estimated to raise taxes by 45 cents per thousand, which equates to about \$45 a year for a \$100,000 home, or about \$3.75 per month. As long as the bond measure passes, we have been approved for a \$4 million matching grant from the state, but this is not received unless the measure is passed. The total project will cost \$12 million, which includes the \$8 million in bond revenue and the \$4 million in state matching funds.

Allow me to summarize the current plan of action should the ballot measure pass in May.

Our overarching goals are to:

1. Provide safe and secure facilities
2. Provide accessible facilities
3. Temper decisions based upon student and educational impact, teacher efficiency, and community impact
4. Consider social impacts of age grouping
5. Perform deferred maintenance and repairs to existing facilities strategically and as cost effectively as possible
6. Incorporate lifecycle facility costs, energy usage, and maintenance approach
7. Consider transportation, busing, and after school activities coordination and timing

In looking at the criteria on how to approach our goals, we have decided to optimize the space available while taking into consideration the capacity of each building and the cost to improve our facilities. Our student population has decreased significantly over the years as the economy in our town has changed, but in recent years our population has leveled out where we are currently serving approximately 850 students. Our student population is projected to stay at this level for the foreseeable future. With these numbers, the best recommended course of action was to consolidate our students into two facilities to optimize space and resources to build and renovate facilities. Burns High School is only operating at approximately 62% of its designed maximum capacity and is our newest facility. Slater is at 85% capacity and Hines Middle School is at 83%. The old Lincoln building where our district offices are currently located is our oldest facility and only hosts a few students in special circumstances. To renovate Lincoln would not be cost effective or productive.

Our current plan is to consolidate grades 6-8 from Hines Middle School into Burns High School and Slater Elementary. Our plan is to build a wing of classrooms onto the high school to accommodate grades 7-8 and another 4 classrooms onto Slater to accommodate the 6th grade students. We also plan to add a gym onto the high school that will be able to house the extra needed gym space for the middle school students during the day and after school for extracurricular activities. The space would also accommodate wrestling, weights and locker rooms and be large enough to include some bleachers.

While our students will be leaving Hines Middle School, the gym and outdoor area will continue to be used by our students for extracurricular and community group needs. We also plan to move the district office and our IT department over to Hines as we would plan on selling or mothballing the Lincoln building.

Much discussion was held about the ideal configuration of grade levels and ultimately the group felt that moving 6th grade to Slater would be the most appropriate move. There is something to be said about allowing them to stay younger a little longer without moving them into a middle school setting to be exposed to the social pressures of older students. Moving the 7th and 8th grades into BHS will allow the district to optimize the use of staff while offering improved electives for these students, especially career and technical type areas. While we understand that some will not like the idea at first of 7th and 8th grade students being in the same building as high school students, we know that internal structures and schedules can be built so as to minimize cross student interactions. K-6 buildings and 7-12 buildings are quite common throughout the United States and Oregon and are very successful. We have no reason to believe that having this same structure here won't be anything but successful.

This is simply an overview. For more exact details, please visit our website or attend future community meetings regarding the subject. We are at the beginning stages of informing the public of our plans and we look forward to answering questions and disseminating information. Ultimately we are looking forward to improving our facilities so they are safer, healthier, and can be something our community is proud of.

The state of the school district here in Burns and Hines is very strong as we continue to build on our past success while looking to the future with the hopes of continued community support, especially as we look to voters to support our continued efforts to optimize and build district facilities for students and expanding programs to ensure their continued success well beyond high school.