



News from the Pattonville School District Board of Education

November 13, 2002

## Refinancing 1993 bonds will save \$1.3 million

Pattonville board members on Nov. 12 approved a resolution that will save Pattonville \$1.3 million over the next 8 years.

The resolution approved by the board authorized A.G. Edwards to refinance debt owed on a 1993 bond issue at a significantly lower interest rate and save the district \$1.3 million in debt payments between now and 2010. The savings affects Pattonville's debt service fund, but does not impact the operating fund balance.

Part of the savings – estimated between \$50,000 and \$80,000 – is attributed to a recent upgrade in Pattonville's bond rating – from A+ to AA-. This rating is one of the highest a school district can receive.

“The district has proven it can maintain its operating balances through these challenging times (Lambert Airport expansion and changes in the desegregation program),” said Amelia Bond of A.G. Edwards about the upgrade in rating from Standard and Poor. “They are looking to your conservative financial management that has led to operating surpluses in the last few years. Rockwood is AA+ and Parkway is AA. They are larger so they have a fundamental advantage over a smaller district like Pattonville because they have a larger tax base. Pattonville stands in the elite districts in having an AA rating.”

In a previous board meeting, Bond told board members now is the time for refinancing the bond issue because interest rates are at 40-year lows. “It's a win-win for you (the board) and for the taxpayers,” she said.

She added, however, that it wouldn't be cost-effective yet to refinance the 2000 bond issue because the closing costs and cost of re-issuing the bonds would exceed any potential cost savings. Refinancing the 1993 bond issue will not prolong the period of time it takes to pay off the debt.

## Pattonville finances sound despite challenges

An evaluation of Pattonville's finance program indicates the district's finances are sound, despite challenges such as an unexpected drop in assessed valuation, the expansion of Lambert Airport and changes to the desegregation program. Goals of the program, established by the Board of Education annually, are being met, according to a report given to the board on Nov. 12 by Chief Financial Officer Ron Mastin.

The goals of Pattonville's financial program are:

- To maintain sufficient fund balances to avoid borrowing to meet expenses;
- To provide competitive salaries to staff;

- To maintain a level of staffing for classrooms that meets or exceeds desirable standards established by the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP); and
- To provide funding to address the recommendations of Pattonville’s Comprehensive School Improvement Program (CSIP) committees.

The report showed that the district maintains a balanced budget by ensuring that expenditures do not exceed revenues for the fiscal year. The only exception to this goal is when the board approves one-time expenditures that drop out of the budget the following year.

Pattonville has also built its balances to around 35 percent and has not participated in short-term borrowing for the past four years. Balances include a \$2 million contingency fund to safeguard against unforeseen acceleration in the reduction of revenue due to changes in the voluntary transfer program.

Pattonville has been fortunate in being able to provide competitive salaries for staff. This year marks the second year of a salary agreement for staff, in which all staff received an 11 percent increase over two years.

Recommendations for the future are:

- Continue to maintain a balanced budget;
- Continue to maintain a beginning fund balance sufficient to avoid short-term borrowing;
- Continue to maintain a contingency fund to address shortfalls in funding from airport buyout, reduced revenue from the voluntary transfer program and the uncertainty of the state’s school funding formula;
- Continue to maintain a contingency fund that will allow the implementation of a replacement cycle for technology;
- Establish a contingency fund for future facility needs;
- Continue to provide competitive salaries for the employees of the Pattonville School District; and
- Create a perpetual database to track changes in assessed valuation in the Pattonville School District.

## African-American achievement improving

Students in the transfer program in the Pattonville School District are seeing improvements in their performance on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), according to an evaluation of the program presented to the Board of Education on Nov. 12. The report also showed that significant progress is being made in narrowing the achievement gap between white and African-American students.

Dr. John Heskett, assistant superintendent for pupil services, said an African-American Achievement Committee in Pattonville met in the 1999-2000 school year and developed several recommendations to improve minority achievement. The recommendations were presented to the board and shared with each building’s school improvement team to incorporate into their school improvement plans. Heskett, Ken McGuire, a home-school liaison, and Brenda Winslow, a school social worker, attributed this, along with the development of several tutoring and mentoring programs, among the many initiatives that have made a difference for African-American students.

“Not only is the achievement of African-American students increasing, but the gap between the achievement of African-American students and Caucasian students is actually reducing in some subject areas,” Heskett said. “That’s an achievement that’s not been seen by many school districts in this area or the state.” Heskett said that this accomplishment is even more significant when considering all students – including Caucasians - made good gains on the MAP tests.

Pattonville has participated in the voluntary transfer program since 1982. The number of participants grew to a high of 1,132 in 1997. Current enrollment is 440, approximately 7 percent of the entire district population and 30 percent of the total African-American population.

The majority of parents of children in the program who responded to a survey indicated high satisfaction with the program with respect to academic progress, social benefit, responsiveness of teachers, communication with the school, fair treatment of their child and safety of their child.

Recommendations made for continued improvement were:

- Develop and conduct follow-up surveys of voluntary transfer students who withdraw from the program to determine reasons for withdrawal; this data will be shared with school improvement teams; and
- Support school improvement teams as they develop strategies to implement the Minority Academic Achievement Report.

## Board meeting with community effective

The Board of Education hosted a meeting for randomly selected residents of the district – both parents and non-parents – in October, and a survey showed that participants felt the evening was valuable in enabling them to communicate with the board more effectively. The board reviewed a summary of comments made during the meeting, as well as an evaluation of the event.

The Board Focus Groups began three years ago as a way to involve residents who might not normally attend discussions with the board.

Participants are selected at random using the district's parent/guardian database, as well as voter registration records from the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners. Invitees are sent a personal letter of invitation from the board. Those who attend share a light dinner with the board, hear an overview about the district and break into small groups with individual board members to discuss topics such as student achievement, safety, communication and facilities. Sixty-one participants – about half from the parent list and half from the voter list – attended.

Participants addressed a variety of questions on their given topic, sharing both kudos and concerns with board members. Input from the sessions will be shared with administrators to use as part of evaluations on different Pattonville programs throughout the year and to share with members of their school improvement teams as they make and update their building plans for improvements. Board Focus Group participants will also receive a copy.

## Art curriculum, science materials OK'd

The Board of Education on Nov. 12 approved revisions to the elementary art curriculum and an instructional materials adoption for middle school science.

The elementary art curriculum has been revised to align with state standards and to give a consistency across all elementary grades, said Rose Acres Art Teacher Mary Tevlin, who is also Pattonville's K-8 art resource teacher.

The instructional materials adoption includes text, equipment kits, CD ROMs and videos for the science curriculum and will cost \$96,692.23.

# Kinney's Corner

Update from Superintendent Hugh Kinney

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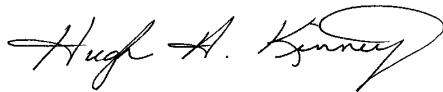
Dear Pattonville family,

Here's a look at what's happening:

- Kudos to Technology Services and the staff and students of Pattonville High School who participated in a very special program to refurbish old computers for Pattonville families in need. Outdated computers that were not purchased in this year's surplus sale were reconditioned, loaded with instructional software and given free of charge to families on the basis of need. What a great way to serve our community, foster student learning and parent involvement at home and make use of outdated resources. Thanks to everyone who played a role in this.
- The dedication of the new additions at the high school (new library, science wing and adolescent parenting room) was a wonderful chance to show off our new facilities to the community and let them see how their tax dollars are being spent for the benefit of children. We had a great turnout, and everyone seemed impressed by the new opportunities these facilities will provide for students, staff and the community.
- Congratulations to our Pattonville Pirates and coaches Don Greco, Brian Simmons, Jim Greco and John Hamilton for winning the District 4 championship! Pattonville now advances to the state quarterfinals and will play Mehlville this Saturday, Nov. 16, at 1:30 p.m. in the Pattonville High School Stadium. Go Pirates!

This Friday, Nov. 15, is what we've titled "Data Day" in Pattonville. This will be the day that staff at each building takes a hard look at their achievement data and develops ways to improve services for our children. Last year was our first year for setting aside an entire day for this important task, and I really believe it's making a tremendous difference for all our children. Thank you for going that extra mile to make a difference for our kids!

Sincerely,



Hugh A. Kinney, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

## Business Bits

### Approval of bills

The Pattonville Board of Education on Nov. 12 approved the following bills and change orders:

- \$2,250,427.69 for regular bills;
- \$105,377.09 for cafeteria bills;
- \$4,794.30 for change orders at Drummond Elementary;
- \$106,092.57 for bond issue change orders;
- \$6,559 for dues to the Missouri School Boards Association; and
- \$4,346.80 to Kohn, Shands, Elbert, Gianoulakis and Giljum for legal services.

## Bid Awards

The Pattonville Board of Education on Nov. 12 approved the following bid awards:

- A contract renewal with Unichem for custodial equipment repair;
- \$8,130 for pest exterminating and rodent control services to McCann Pest Control; and
- \$48,423 to Colonial Carpet for carpet and carpet installation at Pattonville High School.

## Policy/Procedures

The Pattonville school board approved the following policies and procedures on Nov. 12:

- **Policy GDBB (Overtime/Extra Time Compensation for Hourly Support Staff)** – The approved revisions change the word “Non-exempt” to “hourly” and removes the phrases, “as defined by FLSA criteria as school nurses” and “and/or compensatory time off.” The sentence, “‘Exempt’ support employees as defined by the FLSA shall be compensated for ‘extra time’ according to procedure GDBB-R,” will also be removed.
- **Procedure GDBB-R (Overtime/Extra Time Compensation for Hourly Support Staff)** – The approved revisions include changing the word “non-exempt” to “hourly” and removing the following paragraph: “The ‘non-exempt’ or ‘exempt’ status of a support staff position shall be determined by the application of the appropriate criteria contained in the Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. 201-219, and accompanying regulations and each classification shall be appropriately designated. (A list of positions is contained in procedure GDBB-R).” Under the heading “approval,” the words “and extra time” were added, and the words, “and all extra time for exempt employees,” were removed.
- **Procedure GDBC-R-3 (Exhaustion of Sick Leave for Critical/Extended Illness)** – New revisions reflect minor grammatical changes and adds the words “Subject to the support staff member’s rights, if any, under the Family and Medical Leave Act,” to two paragraphs.
- **Policy GDD (Equal Opportunity)** – The word “sex” is changed to “gender.”
- **Policy GDJ (Work Schedules)** – The approved revision changes the words “central office” to “learning center.” New employee categories are added: Paraprofessionals I and II, Paraprofessionals II High School and Paraprofessionals II Elem/Middle. The following sentence is also proposed to be added: “The District will establish an hourly support staff compensated days schedule with Economic Agreement.”

The board also lodged for action the following policy. The board is expected to vote on this item during its regular Nov. 26 board meeting:

- **Policy IGDJ (Interscholastic Athletics/Activities)** – Proposed changes add the words “Weighted or unweighted” as a descriptor for grade point averages.

## New Hires

- **Krista Collins**, paraprofessional, Parkwood
- **Nathanael Turner**, paraprofessional, Parkwood
- **John Kohler**, custodian, high school
- **Paulette Pavia**, bus aide, transportation

### Your Board of Education

- **Ralph Stahlhut**, President
- **Ron Kuschel**, Vice President
- **Pat Bryant**, Secretary
- **Keith Gillming**, Treasurer
- **Jeff Fitterling**, Director
- **Kathy Fitzgerald**, Director
- **Michael Stewart**, Director

