Over the next few years, more than 2,000 new students will come to the Park Hill School District, and we need to find room for them.

Park Hill has grown slowly and steadily for more than 30 years. In the 2014-2015 school year, we have 10,715 students, and experts tell us that our enrollment will continue to grow until we have about 13,000 students.

We are planning ahead for that growth, so we can provide safe, effective places for students to learn while being careful stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Public Feedback:
In spring of 2013, Park Hill started gathering feedback from students, staff, parents and community members about our future facilities. The Board of Education used the feedback when approving criteria for the plan, and our experts used the feedback to develop a long list of possible options.

Parents and staff helped us narrow down that list to three options. We held four open houses and an online discussion using MindMixer to get more public feedback.

Long-Range Facilities Plan:
On March 26, 2015, the Board voted to approve the district’s long-range facilities plan. Now the district will develop enrollment “flashpoints” that would trigger consideration of adding mobile units or building schools, as outlined in this plan.

The plan calls for us to accommodate our enrollment growth by building two elementary schools, which would remain in our current kindergarten-through-fifth-grade configuration.

The plan addresses middle-school growth by building a fourth middle school and changing all four middle schools to a sixth-through-eighth-grade configuration. We would organize sixth graders’ routines to keep them separate from the older students, so they would interact almost exclusively with other sixth graders.

At the high schools, the plan includes a center for special, innovative educational programs, which some students from both Park Hill High School and Park Hill South High School would attend part of the time.
Dear Park Hill Community,

As we work toward a balanced budget for the next school year, we are carefully monitoring challenges like increased enrollment, higher prices for supplies, increased health-care costs and a spike in transportation costs.

We’re also looking on the revenue side, where the state is not fully funding the school formula and we’re seeing a downturn locally in the assessed valuation of existing properties.

These factors mean we must tighten our belt.

One area we are trimming the budget is in classroom technology. By drastically cutting costs for teacher training, hardware, software and support staff, we cut $1.6 million from the plan we took to voters last year. After the levy failed, we surveyed the community, and the response was clear: our voters said they want us to teach 21st-century skills and provide technology in our classrooms, but they do not want us to raise their taxes.

But the problem is bigger than the levy failure and classroom technology, which is why the Efficiency Task Force came up with a list of possible solutions. This team, which includes staff, parents and community members, proposed a list of options for saving money and bringing in new revenue, which would total $316,351.

These include finding more energy savings, reducing some equipment, checking student residency and updating our fees for things like extracurricular activities and facility usage. The task force also brought up some possible future considerations for significant cost savings, including multi-tier busing.

Measures like these to tighten our belt are part of our commitment to this community to provide a world-class education to our children while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,
Scott Springston

Board Votes to Extend Superintendent Dr. Scott Springston’s Contract
Board President Susan Newburger reported that the Board unanimously approved extending Superintendent Dr. Scott Springston’s contract through the 2017-2018 school year.

Committee Makes Changes to Increase Teacher Collaboration
Teachers and administrators have been meeting to build more opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other to improve their work. Graden Principal Dr. LuAnn Halverstadt and Park Hill South High School Assistant Principal Larry Smith reported to the Board that the elementary schools will have an early release day to allow for this collaboration, and the secondary schools are refining how they use their existing collaboration time.

Board Approves First Student’s Bid for Transportation Services
The Board approved the bid for transportation services from First Student. Only one other company submitted a bid, but that company could not provide a facility for the buses and charged significantly more. First Student’s costs will be 17-percent higher than in previous years. The district required several assurances from First Student to improve service to students.

For the latest, most up-to-date news about the Park Hill School District, subscribe to our email newsletter, follow us online or watch our TV broadcasts. See page 4 for more information.
District Success Stories

Congress Teacher is Missouri Outstanding Beginning Teacher
Victoria Belcher, seventh grade science teacher at Congress Middle School, is one of Missouri’s Outstanding Beginning Teachers for 2015, according to the Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

PHHS Senior Named 2015 U.S. Presidential Scholar Candidate
Park Hill High School senior Annie Chen is a candidate in the 2015 U.S. Presidential Scholars program, which honors and recognizes some of our nation’s most distinguished graduating high school seniors. She is one of 560 semifinalists picked for superior achievements, leadership qualities, personal character and involvement in the community and school activities.

Eighth Grader is One of Top Two Youth Volunteers in State of Missouri
Congress eighth grader Blake Harris’ volunteerism earned him one of Missouri’s two 2015 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, and it qualified him as a candidate to be one of America’s Top Youth Volunteers of 2015. Harris performs acts of kindness for people who need a helping hand.

South Teacher Named Student Council Advisor of the Year for Region
Park Hill South teacher and student council advisor Sarah Adkins is the Region VI National Association of Student Councils 2015 Advisor of the Year for the second year in a row. She is now a finalist for the National Advisor of the Year award.

South Junior and Swimming Coach Take Top Awards at State Competition
South junior Tori Beeler earned the co-swimmer of the year award and took first place in both the 200 IM and the 100 meter backstroke at state. South girls swim coach Tim Busenhart took the Swim Coach of the Year award for the second year in a row.

Elementary Students Earn Honors in National Math Competition
Several Park Hill students received honors from a national math competition called the Noetic Learning Math Contest, distinguishing themselves among the more than 19,000 elementary students across the country who participated.

Seventh Grader Goes to Geography Bee
Lakeview Middle School Geography Bee champion, seventh grader Tristan Bramlett, is one of 50 students who qualified to compete in the State Geography Bee.

South Student Wins Piano Fellowship
South senior Eric Norfleet received the 2015 Truman Piano Fellowship Award for his performance at the annual Truman Piano Festival. Norfleet is the second Park Hill South student to receive this award. The award includes a full ride to Truman State University, including room and board. Norfleet is the second South student to receive this award.

Art Students Excel at Regional Show
Eight PHHS students placed at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art’s regional high school art exhibition in St. Joseph, Mo. PHHS earned the most awards out of the 75 high schools who entered. The invitational exhibition includes artwork using several different media and techniques. PHHS senior Alex Gilbert placed first in printmaking.

Student Bridge Builders Win Contest
South students Will Stock, Micah Sovereign, Camden Moffet and Ian Morgan were the winners of the UMKC Bridge Building Contest for the second year in a row. This tournament qualified them for the International Competition in Portland, Ore.
Enroll Now in Park Hill Summer School for Fun, Free, Full-Day Learning Opportunities

Park Hill Summer School is a free, fun, caring place for your child to learn during the summer.

Students who will enter kindergarten through eighth grade in the fall will focus on academics in the morning and fun explorations in the afternoon.

In response to parent feedback, Park Hill Summer School will once again include transportation. You can also purchase meals for your child during summer school, just as you can during the school year.

The deadline to enroll is Wednesday, May 6. Summer school will run from June 1 – July 2.

For more information about summer school, including enrollment, transportation and meals for summer school, see the district website, www.parkhill.k12.mo.us, under “Teaching and Learning.”