



# **SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT**

**DATE:** April 24, 2017  
**FROM:** Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent  
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**For Introduction:** May 3, 2017  
**For Action:** May 17, 2017

## **1. TITLE**

Acceptance of Gift of Highland Park Elementary Playground Improvement Project

## **2. PURPOSE**

This Board Action Report details a Self Help Project playground improvement gift at Highland Park Elementary that may exceed \$250,000.

## **3. RECOMMENDED MOTION**

I move that the School Board accept the gift of the Highland Park Elementary Playground Improvement Project from the Friends of Highland Park Elementary, as described in the Board Action Report.

## **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **a. Background**

The Self Help Projects Program, administered within the Facilities Department, has been a mechanism for volunteer initiated and implemented facility improvements at our District schools since the mid-1970s. Annually, approximately 450 projects are introduced, with 80% to 90% of the projects reaching fruition.

About two years ago, the Friends of Highland Park Elementary (FHPE) initiated an effort to plan, design, and construct a playground improvement project at Highland Park Elementary School.

Currently, the Highland Park Elementary School playground has limited play value: six basketball hoops, five tether ball poles, and painted gamelines for kickball, four-square, and hopscotch, plus a US and World map.

There is no play structure on the main playground. (The separate kindergarten play yard includes a play structure intended for younger grades, but the play yard is too small to accommodate the entire kindergarten at recess; therefore, the kindergarten play yard is used only by the preschool program and by the on-site childcare.) The Park immediately adjacent to Highland Park Elementary is owned by the Seattle Parks Department. The

Park includes a play structure; however, Highland Park students are allowed to use the Park only when there is adequate supervision to take students to the unfenced Park, which occurs only rarely. The Park is currently undergoing a major renovation, and Parks' new equipment will move even further from the school premises.

The Phase 1 improvements at Highland Park Elementary School playground (see attached Site Plan) will include:

- An improved entry at the northwest corner of the playground to provide a more welcoming and inviting presence for the school and playground, as well as increasing safety for student drop-off and pick-up.
- A revised ADA ramp and complementing steps leading to the playground.
- Relocation and installation of the net climber play equipment, which will be surplus from the Lincoln High School site. The play equipment at Lincoln will no longer be relevant when Lincoln is renovated for use as a high school.
- Site infrastructure, including curbing, drainage, safety surface and ADA access, and seat walls.
- Additional play components including a hillside rock scramble and embankment slides.
- Natural play elements will be implemented as funds become available.

Once the project is complete – anticipated late fall 2017 – the improvements become the property of the Seattle School District. The improvements are considered a “gift” to the District. If a gift’s project value exceeds \$250,000, the “gift” is subject to School Board Approval.

The Friends of Highland Park Playground have been actively fundraising to implement their project. To date, \$245,000 in funds have been identified for the project, though not all funds are in hand yet. Since there is a possibility the FHPE will be successful in exceeding \$250,000 in fundraising, this project is being presented to the School Board now, rather than delaying the project later.

Funding sources include:

\$25,000	Department of Neighborhood Matching Funds, used to develop a Conceptual Plan Design, led by Pomegranate Center design team.
\$25,000	Department of Neighborhood Matching Funds, used to develop Construction Documents (including survey), led by Pomegranate Center design team.
\$69,000	King County Youth Sports Facilities Grant, for installing the relocated net climber play equipment from Lincoln, together with two embankment slides, and associated site work including safety surface.
\$5,000	Capital One grant, to be used toward construction.
\$100,000	Request to Department of Neighborhood for Community Partnership Matching Fund, to be used toward construction. Notification whether Matching Funds will be awarded is expected at the end of May.

\$10,000	School District contribution from the Self Help Projects Office's capital funds, for bid advertising, temporary fencing, city permits, and infrastructure.
\$1,000	Seattle Department of Transportation Mini Grant to paint a street-intersection graphic for purposes of traffic calming as part of Safe Routes to School.
<u>\$10,000</u>	Fundraising by Steering Committee.
<b>\$245,000</b>	<b>Anticipated Total Project Cost</b> (Value of volunteer hours and donated services, which count towards required Match for grants, is not included.)

**b. Alternatives**

An alternative is to not accept the playground improvements gift. This is not recommended, since Highland Park Elementary currently does not have a play structure on their main playground, and there are very limited existing playground amenities on this school's playground.

**c. Research**

Numerous studies show the value of active play to support the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of children. A growing body of scientific literature has documented a link between rigorous activity and enhanced learning and improved test scores. Children engaged in active play strengthen bones and muscles; combat childhood obesity; and develop life-long habits for an active lifestyle. Active play can also contribute to decreased stress.

Highland Park Elementary students were engaged in an educational exercise to describe what elements they want to see on their improved playground, and overwhelmingly requested playground equipment.

**5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE**

The fiscal impact to this action:

Expenditures -- Staff support to review and facilitate the FHPE efforts to design and build the playground; a one-time contribution of up to \$10,000 Capital funds as Match to other agencies' grants, and to contribute towards the construction costs; and on-going maintenance costs from the Facilities Department budget, when routine maintenance is warranted.

Revenue – accepting a one-time gift of playground improvements from FHPE.

Expenditure:  One-time (Capital)  Annual (General Fund)  Multi-Year  N/A

Revenue:  One-time (Gift)  Annual  Multi-Year  N/A

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With guidance from the District's Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

Not applicable

Tier 1: Inform

Tier 2: Consult/Involve

Tier 3: Collaborate

The efforts by the Friends of Highland Park Elementary to improve the school's playground was initiated long before the inception of the District's Community Engagement tool; therefore, the tool was not utilized.

However, the very nature of Self Help Projects – initiation and implementation of improvement projects by the community – is intended to strengthen school/neighborhood/community bonds, and foster goodwill within the community. The project's activities, together with the high expectations by grantors for rigorous community engagement as part of their matching grant requirements, has achieved robust community outreach and engagement for this project. The engagement strategies were used (1) to inform the school's staff, students, families, and neighbors about the project, (2) to invite ideas from each of these groups regarding desired improvements, in order to incorporate them into the design, and (3) to ask for, and consider feedback from each of these groups regarding the plans as they were developed.

Some examples of outreach and engagement include:

- The steering committee, comprised of representatives of school families, staff and neighbors, has convened routinely for the last two years to keep the project in a forward trajectory and ensure community involvement.
- During the conceptual planning phase, volunteers distributed fliers door-to-door to homes surrounding the school to invite neighbors to a dinner hosted by the Friends of Highland Park Elementary. Participants were encouraged to contribute their ideas for improving the playground. Over 100 adults and children attended. The design team consultants led a graphics exercise, after which people shared their thoughts with each other.
- The design team consultant led an in-classroom effort (1) with 4<sup>th</sup> graders to design and build their dream playground with popsicle sticks, and (2) with 1<sup>st</sup> graders to draw their dream playground. These students' creations were prominently featured at the first community design meeting to inspire imaginative thinking.
- "Monthly Kickball Saturdays" was initiated to bring families to the playground to get to know each other, and experience the shortcomings of the playground. At these exuberant gatherings, steering committee representatives shared progress on the playground project.
- Representatives of HPES have been present at numerous events and venues to share the status of the playground and encourage involvement: all-school Cultural Night, square dance, free family movie night, Highland Park Improvement Club.
- The West Seattle Blog has featured the project and imminent meetings/events.

**7. EQUITY ANALYSIS**

The efforts by the Friends of Highland Park Elementary to improve the school’s playground was initiated before the inception of the District’s Racial Equity Analysis tool; therefore, the tool was not utilized.

However, it is important to highlight that this project will benefit the racially diverse Highland Park Elementary students and surrounding community. Early fall 2016 information indicates that in its nearly 400-student body, 84% are students of color, 77% receive free or reduced-price lunch, over 32% of students receive ELL services, and 14% receive Special Education services. Numerous languages are spoken by Highland Park Elementary families. The three predominant languages are English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Translated fliers for outreach were provided to the extent possible. The steering committee gave considerable thought to culturally relevant community engagement, though there is still a struggle to fully achieve this.

**8. STUDENT BENEFIT**

As noted above, studies have shown that rigorous activity promotes important educational, social, emotional and physical aspects of child development. An improved Highland Park Elementary playground will provide opportunities for relevant and rigorous activities that will benefit all students at the school.

**9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY**

- Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)
- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy
- Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract
- Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter
- Board Policy No. 6114, Gift, Grants, Donations and Fundraising Proceeds, provides the Board shall approve this item
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. POLICY IMPLICATION**

Board Policy No. 6114 -- Gift, Grants, Donations and Fundraising Proceeds – actively encourages cooperation with individuals and governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as from private and foundation sources desiring to provide resource assistance to the district. Any gift of any type having a total value (including both the contribution and any district

resources required to be contributed) of \$250,000 or greater are subject to Board approval. This motion is consistent with School Board Policy 6114.

Board Policy No. 6807 -- Self Help Facilities Improvement Projects -- allows and encourages facilities improvements projects as a means to (1) strengthen school/neighborhood/community bonds; (2) augment Seattle School District resources; (3) instill pride among students, staff, and families; and (4) foster goodwill within the community. This playground improvement project is consistent with this policy. The motion is consistent with School Board Policy No. 6807.

#### **11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

This item was reviewed by the Operations Committee at the April 20, 2017 meeting. The committee moved this item forward to the full Board with a recommendation for approval.

#### **12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Upon approval of this motion, the Friends of Highland Park Elementary will proceed with their playground improvement project for Highland Park Elementary School. Fundraising is expected to continue through late spring. Competitive bidding will occur early summer, with construction anticipated late summer through fall. Community engagement will continue to keep people informed and invite volunteer participation in implementation efforts where applicable.

#### **13. ATTACHMENTS**

- Diagram illustrating the Friends of Highland Park Playground Conceptual Site Plan Improvements