

Bond Oversight Committee Status Report

February 2018

The Houston Independent School District Bond Oversight Committee got an up-close and personal look at a 21st-century learning environment on Tuesday when they toured the new North Forest High School during their regular quarterly meeting.

The eight-member group gathered first in the auditorium for a brief introduction and a chance to see the space's retractable seating, before moving on to the dramatic main hall, which serves as a focal point for the school.

The space features modern chandeliers and lots of windows providing both natural light and views of the surrounding landscape. It connects to a food-court-style dining commons with two levels of flexible seating.

Led by North Forest Principal Darryl Henson and HISD Facilities Design General Manager Dan Bankhead, the tour also featured the school's two gymnasiums and a unique, second-level, indoor running track — the first of its kind in HISD. Committee members also got a chance to see one of the second-floor learning stairs and career and technical education rooms.

The \$59.5 million facility, located directly across Mesa Drive from the original school, opened on Jan. 8. The project was funded with state money, but construction was managed by the district's bond team.

Following the tour, committee members gathered in an upstairs classroom, where HISD Construction Services Officer Derrick Sanders provided the committee with a status report on the 2012 Bond Program.

Fifty percent of projects are now complete, Sanders said, noting that almost 80 percent would be complete by the end of this year. By the end of next year, he added, all but one school will be completed and opened.

Five new campuses opened to students for the first time on Jan. 8. They include Sharpstown, Scarborough, and North Forest high schools, as well as Robinson Elementary, which underwent a major renovation after being damaged during Hurricane Harvey. The district also opened a new temporary campus to house Austin High School students and staff during the rebuilding of their school.

[See video on HISD's newest schools](#)

Eight more projects are expected to wrap up by June, Sanders said. They are Parker and Hilliard elementary schools, Lawson Middle School, Washington and Yates high schools, High School for Law and Justice, and Eastwood and Pilgrim academies. Hilliard is not part of the 2012 Bond, but is undergoing renovation due to damages sustained during Hurricane Harvey.

HISD Chief Operating Officer Brian Busby also briefed the committee on his proposed 20-Year Capital Plan, which calls for four bonds over the next two decades. Each bond would have a similar structure. In addition to funding for new relief schools and existing facility repair and replacement, each bond would include money earmarked for technology, transportation, safety and security upgrades, and building automation, HVAC and lighting controls.

Busby said a new bond could be approved by the HISD Board of Education and put on the ballot for voter approval in November 2018 or May 2019.

The oversight committee also heard updates on the financial status of the 2012 Bond Program, which continues to maintain a AAA rating, as well as minority- and women-owned business enterprise participation rates, which continue to track above board-established goals.

Additionally, members were informed about communications and community engagement efforts, including the team's work to provide bond principals with targeted updates and parent. The team also is continuing to coordinate and cover project milestone celebrations and promote and use the new twitter account — @Build_HISD — to provide updates and information to targeted stakeholder groups.

HISD's \$1.89 billion bond program was approved by Houston voters in 2012. In addition to campus-based projects, the program also includes work benefiting students across the district, including \$100 million in technology upgrades, \$44.7 million to replace regional fieldhouses and improve athletics facilities, \$35 million to renovate middle school restrooms, and \$17.3 million for safety and security improvements.

The next quarterly meeting of the Bond Oversight Committee is scheduled for April 2018.