



BOARD MEETING MEMORANDUM

Board Meeting Date: September 15, 2026

From: Aron Borowiak, Superintendent

Re: New Early Learning Center Facility Updates - Next Options

Agenda Location: Information / Discussion

Rationale:

The District continues planning for the replacement of the Mary Kay McNeill Early Learning Center, which opened in 1928. Representatives from CCS International and Legat Architects will provide the Board of Education with an update regarding the Village of Antioch entitlement process, the potential implications for the current project, and alternative options available to the District.

Village of Antioch Entitlement Update

On September 2, 2026, the Village of Antioch Planning and Zoning Board voted not to recommend approval of the District's application for a special use permit to construct the new Early Learning Center at the corner of Tiffany Road and North Avenue. This recommendation does not conclude the Village's review process but does present a significant obstacle. The District may still bring the application before the Village Board for consideration, potentially at its October 14, 2026, meeting.

The Tiffany Road and North Avenue property was purchased by the District in 1994 with the intention that it would eventually serve as the site of a future D34 school. Since beginning the current planning process, the District and project team have evaluated and responded to concerns involving traffic, site access, drainage, parking, landscaping, pedestrian connectivity, lighting, safety, and neighborhood impact.

Tiffany Road and North Avenue Site

If the Village Board approves the special use permit, the District would be positioned to maintain the current project schedule. However, the Village may request additional improvements or conditions as part of its consideration. Potential improvements discussed include:

- Sidewalk extensions along North Avenue and Tiffany Road, preliminarily estimated at \$200,000 to \$300,000.



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- Structural improvements to the Highview Drive and Tiffany Road intersection, preliminarily estimated at \$600,000 to \$1.5 million.

Any additional improvements could require new surveys, engineering work, professional fees, Village review, and additional time. To minimize delays to the primary project, the project team may recommend bidding certain improvements separately from the Early Learning Center construction package.

Alternative Site Considerations

If the Tiffany Road and North Avenue proposal is not approved, the District will need to evaluate alternative locations and approaches. CCS International and Legat Architects will present preliminary information regarding the following options:

- **Savage Road property:** The current Early Learning Center design could fit on the site; however, all site-related work would require redesign. Preliminary estimates identify approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 in additional professional fees, a seven- to eight-month delay, and approximately \$3 million in construction-cost escalation. Road improvements, utility access, fiber connectivity, grading, stormwater management, paving, and building orientation would also require further evaluation and a definite increase in unknown costs.
- **Hillcrest Elementary School property:** The building appears to be a tight fit within the available area, but a traffic study, soil borings, wetland delineation, and additional site analysis would be required. Preliminary estimates identify approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 in additional professional fees, an eight- to twelve-month delay, and approximately \$5.5 million in construction-cost escalation. Wetlands, shared access, traffic circulation, and possible access limitations involving Deep Lake Road will create additional challenges.
- **Existing MKM property:** The existing site is not large enough to accommodate the Early Learning Center as currently designed. A smaller, redesigned facility would be required, and the District would need to determine where preschool students would be served during demolition and construction. The preliminary total project budget is estimated at \$42 million to \$45 million, with a potential opening in fall 2030. Because the site cannot accommodate the District's current preschool and kindergarten plan, kindergarten students would likely remain in the elementary schools.
- **Acquisition of another property:** The District could explore acquiring property in another community within its boundaries, such as Lake Villa or Lindenhurst. This option would require a property search, acquisition process, due diligence, new site planning, and additional engineering and design work, resulting in an extended project timeline and additional costs.

Financial and Long-Term Implications



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A significant benefit of the current Tiffany Road and North Avenue proposal is that the project can be completed under the District's current financial plan without a referendum or additional taxpayer costs. Alternative sites or a broader facilities solution could require substantial additional expenditures for land acquisition, engineering, redesign, construction escalation, temporary student placement, and other site-related improvements. Depending on the alternative selected, a future referendum may be necessary to address kindergarten capacity and other long-term facility needs.

Next Steps

The administration and project team will continue evaluating the District's options while determining whether to bring the special use application before the Village Board. The District remains committed to identifying a responsible, sustainable, and educationally appropriate solution that serves its youngest learners, supports families and staff, and addresses the community's long-term needs.

Recommendation/Motion:

Information / Discussion