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Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

By now I'm sure that most of our school community has heard about the delays associated with the building project for the new Thomas Jefferson High School. The original timeline had the project being completed this spring and open in time for the 2018-2019 school year. The first phase of construction was preparing the site and getting it ready for the building pad. The project got off to a rough start when the start of phase two was delayed because of the amount of deep dynamic compaction and mine grouting that needed to occur. While this setback resulted in increased costs, it's still important to remember that the district purchased the 160-acre parcel of land for only \$1.1 million which was far below market value. For example, local districts that are also undertaking new high school projects have paid over five times as much for less acreage for their sites.

When I was hired in March 2017, I immediately became closely involved with the High School project. At that time, the project had already made up some time and was showing a July 20th date of completion. Through the spring and summer the project completion date remained in the summer of 2018, although the original sequencing had gone by the wayside, and Nello Construction, who is the general contractor of the project, departed from the original schedule to focus on various sections of the building in a phased approach. What we were not informed of until August 2017 was that the schedule was starting to slide again because of the sequencing and insufficient progress on roofing and masonry. Despite our requests and the district's acceptance of a Project Labor Agreement intended to facilitate the availability of workmen, the number of roofers and bricklayers devoted to the project actually declined. Although the contractors were afforded other avenues for labor because of the PLA, they chose not to pursue them. We were told as we entered the winter months that more labor would be available and that with a mild winter we could regain some of the footing lost in the schedule and that we could still get in on time.

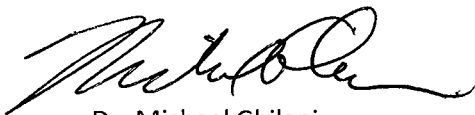
We requested a recovery schedule in November and have done so since that time but have yet to officially receive one. During December, there were days when we had as few as four roofers and twelve bricklayers on the project, even though we were told more workers were available through the union hiring halls. Since then, many major milestones were missed and the schedule has continued to slide. We knew coming out of February that getting into the building by September was a long shot. It was at that point that we began to plan for a Thanksgiving move-in date which was reflected by adding an additional day to Thanksgiving break in the 2018-2019 school calendar that was approved by the school board in March. Thanksgiving seemed both reasonable and logical given where we were on the project, although the district was not presented any sort of recovery plan until May 2018. Because of this slide, the project is now further behind.

Since the project is out of sequence, it has now become a phased project. Most of the classrooms are dry walled, painted, and receiving casework. However, the theatre and arts classrooms just had their cement slabs poured at the end of May. We have had many meetings with our construction manager (Turner Construction), general contractor (Nello Construction), Prime contractors, and even some of the general contractor's subcontractors to move this project along. We are currently working with Nello Construction to investigate if a recovery schedule with a November move-in date as the target is possible. I can't say I am optimistic about this timeframe for a number of reasons including the lack of performance up until this point in the project. Realistically, I believe a January or later move-in date is more likely.

We will continue to monitor the project and its timelines and exert efforts to move the project along. While getting into the new building for the start of the 2018-2019 school year would have been ideal, the most important thing is that the building is constructed with quality and that we continue to keep additional costs to a minimum. The building is going to be something that this school district and community will be proud of for a very long time. What is constructed looks amazing, and I'm positive that any disappointment about the project's delay will quickly subside once the new building is opened.

I will continue to keep our school community updated on the progress and the timeline. While I know that there still isn't a definitive date, it is something we are working toward and hope to have greater clarity on in the next few months. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michael Ghilani
Superintendent

MPG/pjz