

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

August 1, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Update on Takoma Park Elementary School Outdoor Play Space Project
(06-25-18-01)

Question

During Public Comments, Board members requested the following:

- A. Information regarding the three questions and field preparatory issues at Takoma Park Elementary School as referenced in Ms. Wajda's Public Comments testimony. (See attached testimony.)
- B. That staff facilitate better community involvement in the process for planning the new Takoma Park Elementary School play space project.
- C. That staff improve communications with the Takoma Park Elementary School community regarding the planning process for the new play space project as referenced in Ms. Wajda's Public Comments testimony.
- D. Information regarding any Takoma Park Elementary School play space project pre-work that could happen before the July 1 funding from the County Council.

Response

Concept and design planning for the outdoor play space project at Takoma Park Elementary School, as well as at several additional elementary schools, was ongoing during the past school year. Following initial discussions with school and parent/guardian leadership, a number of specific planning and design elements could not be determined until the County Council approved the final funding amount for the project.

At this juncture, we have met again with school community stakeholders, as well as permit officials, to confirm the scope of work and project approach. Equipment and materials have been ordered with anticipated completion of the playground element in late fall 2018. The grass element will be timed for successful growth.

Attached is the text of a message from the chief operating officer to the Takoma Park Elementary School community distributed via Connect-ED on Friday, July 27, 2018. We will continue to provide project updates throughout the process.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Andrew M. Zuckerman, chief operating officer, at 240-740-3050.

JRS:AMZ:sro

Attachment

Copy to:

- Dr. Navarro
- Dr. Statham
- Dr. Zuckerman
- Mr. Civin
- Dr. Johnson
- Ms. Diamond
- Mr. Song
- Mr. Turner
- Mr. Ikheloa

Connect-ED
Update on Takoma Park Elementary School Outdoor Play Space Project

From: **Do_Not_Reply** <Do_Not_Reply@mcpsmd.org>
Date: Friday, July 27, 2018 1:45 PM
Subject: Update on Outdoor Play Space Project
To: Montgomery County Public Schools Recipients
<recipients@montgomeryschoolsmd.parentlink.net>

Dear Takoma Park ES Parents and Guardians,

I am pleased to report that we have finalized the design and scope of work for the Outdoor Play Space project at Takoma Park Elementary School, and are moving into the construction phase of the project. I would like to share with you some highlights of the status at this time as well as next steps:

- The design team has met with permit officials to firm up the scope of work and concept approach.
- A detailed site survey of the work area was conducted and additional soil testing is in process.
- MCPS staff, the design team, school administration, PTA and parent focus group finalized the design concept and equipment selection. The equipment has been ordered and is expected to be available as early as the middle of October.
- Delivery of the new flexi-pave area and new playground equipment are on schedule for a late fall completion.
- The project work will be phased to allow both the existing hard surface and existing play equipment area to remain in use during the construction process.

As we move through the project we will coordinate the timing of the new Bermuda grass play area to provide the best possible long term success of the grass. We will continue to communicate with school and PTA leadership as permitting and purchasing move forward and we will also provide status updates to you directly. I hope you enjoy your summer, and we look forward to welcoming you back at the start of the 2018-2019 school year.

Andrew Zuckerman
Chief Operating Officer
Montgomery County Public Schools

6/25/2018

Public Comment for Amy Wajda
Montgomery County Board of Education
June 25, 2018

My name is Amy Wajda. I have children at two Takoma Park schools and am here on behalf of the Takoma Park Elementary School PTA.

Our PTA testified here 15 months ago — along with PTAs from several other schools — in support of the Outdoor Play Space Maintenance Project.

We were grateful to the Board and to the County Council for approving the project, and met several times with MCPS during the past year about how to create a better play space at Takoma Park.

We worked with MCPS to develop a design we were told could be implemented this summer, without site permits, even though that meant accepting a design with less permanent surfacing than we think our students need.

We did this because we knew our students shouldn't have to wait any longer than absolutely necessary for decent play space. As you saw last year, our community has put up with poor field conditions for years.

It never crossed our minds that anyone involved in this process could think a field like this was anything less than an urgent priority. We are now told that because of previously undisclosed permitting requirements, we must now wait for construction to begin this fall.

After having told our community last fall to be patient for yet another year, we must now tell them it appears that MCPS took no preparatory action to ensure summer construction. And that we must accept construction **during the school year**, with no set timeframe as of yet.

This is unacceptable to our PTA and, as you will find, will be unacceptable to our broader community.

We know other schools, such as Sligo Creek and Flora Singer, also struggle with broken play fields, and we hope their needs will also be addressed expeditiously. And, we remind you that no other school starts with a play space footprint as small as Takoma Park's.

Our entire footprint is about 20,000 square feet. When our field is closed, that number drops to about 8,600 square feet, which is a bit larger than the penalty box on a soccer field.

So, if you're watching the World Cup this week and think the box looks crowded on corner kicks, think about fitting 200 K-2 children into that space, and then expecting them to move.

When we tell you it's urgent, and that we're out of patience, this is why.

Our children just need room to move. They don't need to wait for school-year construction that will probably close off their remaining play space for weeks or even months.

We just graduated an entire cohort of students who never knew their field to be anything other than this, and put up with countless days jammed into a penalty box.

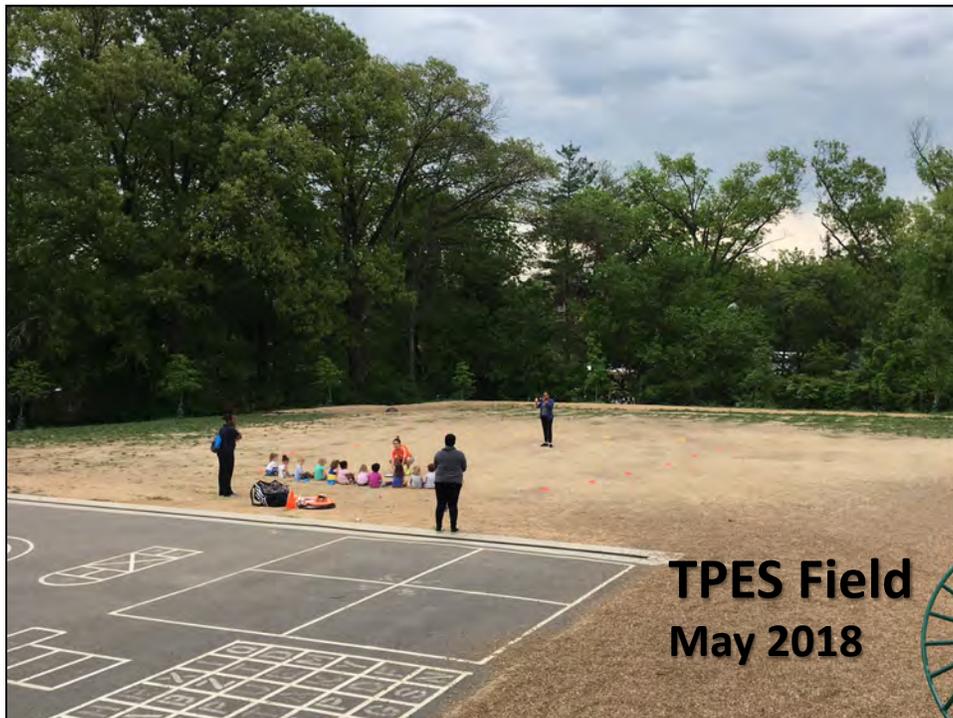
To be specific, here is what we are requesting without delay:

- (1) Transparency around the FY19-20 plan for completing the renovations to all schools included in this project.
- (2) Inclusion in the discussion and access to decision making conversations around the TPES field final design.
- (3) Expedited consultant appointment and permitting to ensure that construction is completed sooner than MCPS is currently projecting.

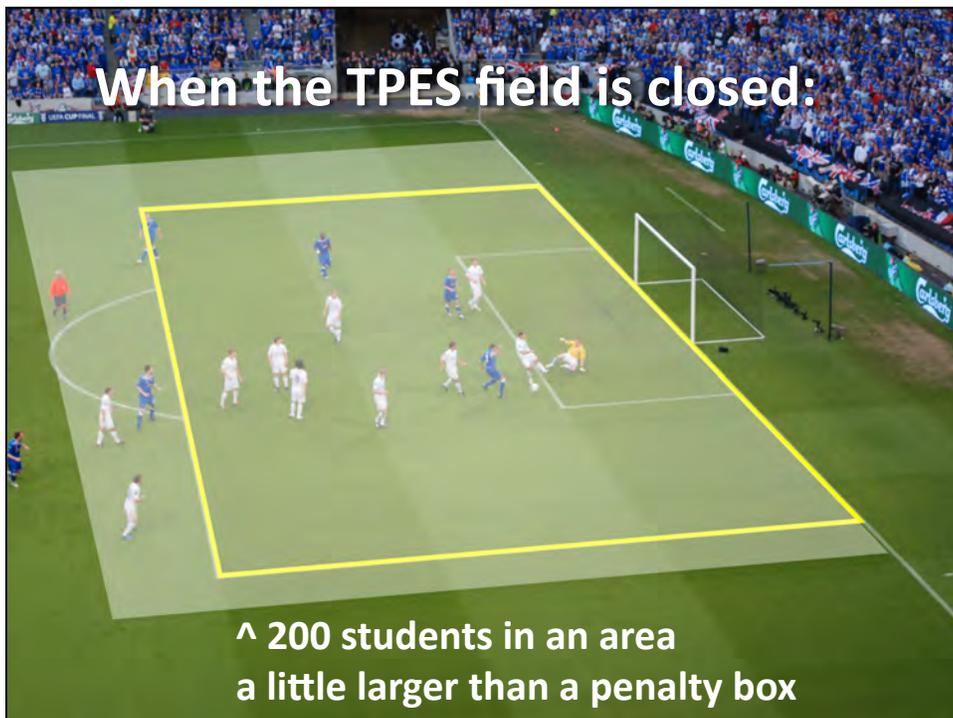
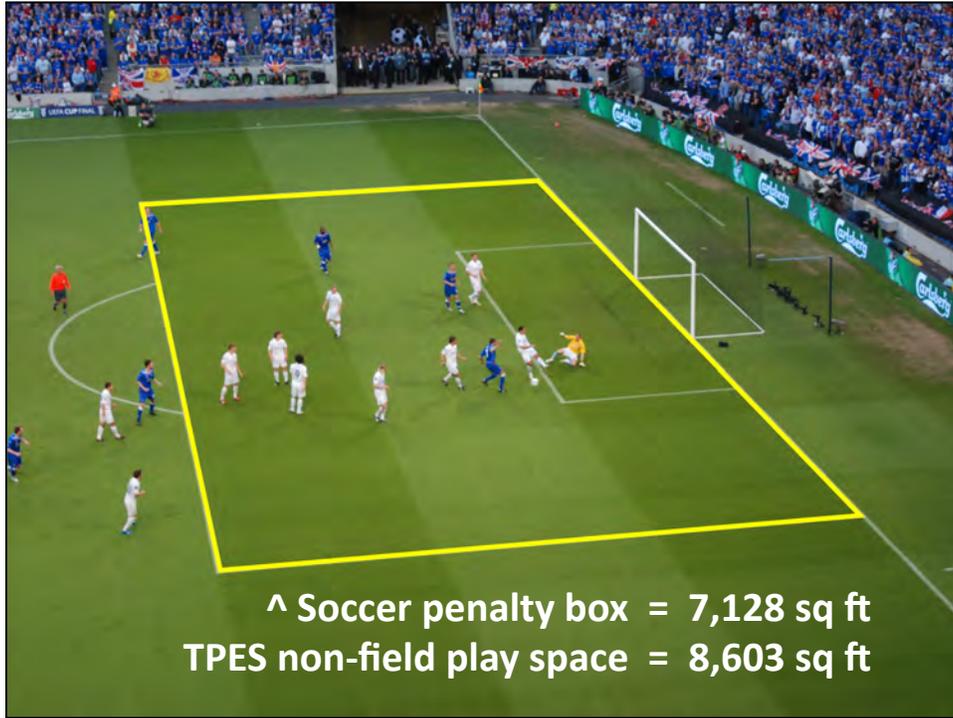
Thank you.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Photos of TPES field April-June 2018
- TPES no-field recess space comparison
- Email from Gary Mosesman 12/7/2017
- Email from Gary Mosesman 2/22/2018







From: Mosesman, Gary D Gary_D_Mosesman@mcpsmd.org 

Subject: RE: TPES site play area

Date: December 7, 2017 at 2:16 PM

To: Smith, Patricia L Patricia_L_Smith@mcpsmd.org, Allyson Piazza allypiazza@yahoo.com

Cc: Lia Salza lia.salza@gmail.com, amy@takomadesign.com, Gadsden, Zadia T Zadia_T_Gadsden@mcpsmd.org, Jenkins, Roger L Roger_L_Jenkins@mcpsmd.org

GM

To all,

I apologize for not keeping you in the loop on the current status of the pilot program for outdoor program/play areas. Based on the input we received at several meeting with each school we are formalizing all of the school sites initial design concepts into a graphic presentation to provide to leadership. Once this has been reviewed we will move into construction documents. It will be at this time we will be coordinating with each school to finalize the design concepts in detail so that we can move forward with a formal bidding process on all of the projects. As each project is unique and introducing nontraditional approaches we are coordinating with other MCPS departments for additional feedback.

In regards to a time line we will have information available for each school as well as leadership in early January 2018. We are anticipating that design documents and additional meetings will occur during February and having bid documents and bids received in Early April. This will allow the work to start and be completed over the summer 2018 break. This schedule only applies for projects where site permits will not be required, Takoma Park ES should not require site permits.

The initial budget of \$750,000 for the pilot program was established for design and implementation. However it became apparent that this would not be a sufficient amount of capital and as such a recommendation was made and approved by the BOE on November 27 to increase the funding in FY 2019 an additional \$1.750 million and FY 2020 another \$1.750 million. As you may be aware the recommendation now moves to County Council with approval in late May and potential additional funds available July 1 2018.

Regards,
Gary

Gary Mosesman, AIA LEED AP
MCPS Division of Construction
45 W. Gude Drive, Suite 4300
Rockville, Maryland 20850
Main (240) 314-1000



From: Mosesman, Gary D Gary_D_Mosesman@mcpsmd.org

Subject: RE: TPES site play area - timeline update?

Date: February 22, 2018 at 4:09 PM

To: amy@takomadesign.com, Smith, Patricia L Patricia_L_Smith@mcpsmd.org

Cc: Gadsden, Zadia T Zadia_T_Gadsden@mcpsmd.org, Jenkins, Roger L Roger_L_Jenkins@mcpsmd.org, Lia Salza lia.salza@gmail.com, Sara Benson bense22@yahoo.com, Allyson Piazza allypiazza@yahoo.com

To all,

Thank you for reaching out in regards to the status of pilot program at Takoma Park Elementary Schools. At this time we have provided leadership with data and cost associated with each of the sites. There is an upcoming county council meeting on February 26, 2018 - 01:55 PM at which time additional discussion of the pilot program will occur along with many other items. I cannot provide any further detail information of the timeline other than we are poised to move on any of the projects once direction is provided.

ED 2-26-18 Item below is related to Montgomery County Public Schools: See page 7 [Outdoor Play Space Maintenance Project](#)

[Analyst Packet](#)

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/ondemand/index.html>

Current and Upcoming Events			
Name	Date	Agenda/Packets	View Event
PS/GO (9:30) and PS (10:00) 2-26-18	February 26, 2018 - 09:25 AM	Agenda/Packets	
State Legislation	February 26, 2018 - 12:25 PM	Agenda/Packets	
ED 2-26-18	February 26, 2018 - 01:55 PM	Agenda/Packets	
Council Session	February 27, 2018 - 09:30 AM	Agenda/Packets	
Evening Public Hearing - US 29 Mobility and Reliability Study	February 27, 2018 - 07:25 PM		

I hope this is helpful and provides some understanding of where MCPS is in the process of this exciting pilot program.

Regards,
Gary

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