

# D153 board approves contracts for school building improvements

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District 153 took its first steps for the \$8.2 million major improvements projects set for the summer months of 2022 and 2023.

Before the regular school board meeting Jan. 10, board members conducted a public hearing beginning the process of financing the work through the sale of bonds. No comments were offered from the public. The board is expected to pass a resolution to approve the sale of the bonds at its Feb. 14 meeting.

Work at the schools is being directed by Wight Architects, with staff from Gilbane Building Company serving as construction manager for the projects that will address air quality, space needs, updates to all bathrooms and to infrastructure, including replacing boilers and roof repairs.

The board also accepted a bid of \$645,049 from Trane USA, selected as the low bidder from four bids. Accepting the bid allows for the district to place the order now for indoor air quality mechanical equipment that will be in-

stalled at Willow, Churchill and James Hart Schools during summer break. The board will be using the third distribution of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds for that work.

The COVID-19 pandemic spurred some of the improvements because Congress appropriated money in the pandemic relief Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for improvements to school buildings, said Superintendent Scott McAlister. Of the \$2.3 million the district received in its third ESSER installment, \$1.2 million is set aside for HVAC work to improve air quality.

The board also accepted a \$275,727 bid from Vesta Modular for a four-classroom mobile unit to be installed at Willow School. The contract covers delivery and site work costs with a 36-month lease of \$4,860 per month. The company has previously done business with District 153 when it installed a mobile unit at Churchill School several years ago. The board approved a \$27,550 expense for utility hook-ups between the school building and the modular unit.



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