

Bond referendum process has begun

By Kennedy Schumacher

The Durant School District has formed a new Facility Advisory Committee (FAC) to investigate another bond referendum. The committee has a goal of making a recommendation to the school board by this spring.

Four Durant seniors, Ethan Gast, Ben Orr, Shannon Head, and Ally Happ, are serving on the committee along with 44 other staff members and parents.

The committee is in charge of deciding if it is in the school's best interest to pursue a bond. The committee will also be deciding what types of improvements it thinks would be best for the school.

The district proposed a \$10.8 million bond project that was defeated at the polls in 2018.

For the bond to pass, there needs to be at least 60 percent "yes" votes, said Durant Superintendent Joe Burnett.

If there were another try for a bond, there would be a better community buy-in, therefore a better chance of being successful, he said.

The needs never went away after

the bond failed in 2018. Now those needs are being revisited and advised by the FAC, said Mr. Burnett.

As of now, "nothing has really been started yet," said Durant band teacher Mr. Kevin Mundt, one of the FAC members. So far, the committee has had only one meeting in September, had a tour of the building, and discussed general improvements the school needs.

During the tour of the school building at the first meeting, many facility needs were discussed, including air conditioning, a secure office entrance, auditorium renovations, gym space and athletics, general lighting around the school, and adding an office for elementary students closer to the east wing of the building.

Currently, all grades are serviced through one office near the high school commons.

Mr. Mundt would also like to see something done with the auditorium, whether that means completely gutting it or just adding better lighting and new seating. Orr and Gast agreed.

"[The] auditorium definitely needs

work because the seats are outdated, and the lighting is bad and so is the stage area," said Orr.

Parents on the FAC had concerns of not being able to see their children during concerts and performances in the auditorium due to poor lighting conditions, according to Orr.

Mr. Mundt was asked to join the committee by school board member Katy Oberlander.

"It's important for there to be a fine arts representative on the committee," said Mr. Mundt, explaining why he joined the committee.

Mr. Mundt feels it's also necessary to "have a large, diverse group because we all bring different things to the table."

The band teacher said he would also like to see air conditioning included in the bond.

"I think air conditioning should be a priority," said Mr. Mundt.

He points out that there are more economical ways of providing air conditioning. When asked, Mr. Burnett said he didn't have an exact amount for the cost of air con-

ditioning because "there are so many variables."

As well as wanting to see the auditorium renovated, Gast feels something needs to be done with the small gym.

"I'd like to see the small gym [have] better bleachers," said Gast.

Gast was asked to join the FAC by school board member Julie Rivera and thinks high schoolers bring a different perspective to the committee because "we're here everyday."

"I think it'd be more beneficial to have us on the committee to help improve some of the facilities," he said.

Gast joined the committee because ultimately he wanted to "help out our school."

Orr feels the same about being a part of the committee. Orr said he was asked by Principal Joel Diederichs if he would be interested in joining the FAC.

"I thought it would be interesting and fun to represent Durant and knowing that I could [have] potentially been a part of a big project, and my voice would be heard," said Orr.

Seniors Schlapkohl, Roberts restore vintage cars

By Madison Weber

Two Durant seniors, Ethan Schlapkohl and Tyler Roberts, have been fixing up vintage cars and creating special bonds in the process.

Schlapkohl and his father Jon have been fixing up a 2002 Mustang GT for about six to seven months while Roberts and his uncle, Matthew Cook, a former Durant High School graduate, have been working on Roberts's grandfather's 1969 Ford Torino GT SportsRoof for about three to four weeks.

His grandfather recently passed away, and Roberts is very thankful to be able to work on the car with his uncle.

Roberts's grandfather had sold the car before Cook was born, so to get his car back, Cook had to find the list of sellers. He followed the line of people, and eventually found it and bought it for \$5,000.

When they bought the car, "it was torn down to the bare bones," said Roberts, and someone had started to sandblast it, but they never finished. Roberts believes it will take five to eight years to completely restore it.

"The easiest thing was pulling the small components out of the engine bay," said Roberts. These components consist of the master brake cylinder and the windshield wiper motor.

"The hardest part would be replacing both rear quarter panels and patching the rest of the holes in and around the firewall and toe boards," said Roberts.

Roberts has had an exciting adventure with the car so far.

"It absolutely will be rewarding because we are bringing a piece of Durant history back to life," said Roberts. "This has been a dream of my uncle's for a very long time."

Cook initially wanted to restore the car for his dad, but unfortunately never got the chance. They both are extremely grateful to have this opportunity and believe restoring the car will be a great way to remember him.

"We both feel like he'll be riding along whenever we take the car out on the road," said Roberts.

For Schlapkohl, the Mustang he

and his father are working on wasn't even running when they bought the car, and they needed to pull out the transmission.

"We needed to replace the clutch as well as fix a few seals to get it running," said Schlapkohl. They have also replaced the AC compressor, fuse, ball joints, and radiator.

They knew this car was going to be a big project, and challenges would arise.

"The easiest thing to fix was the radiator and the hardest thing to fix [so far] was the clutch," said Schlapkohl.

Throughout these past few months, Schlapkohl and his father have become closer over their love for and drive to fix this car.

"I think my relationship with my dad has improved since we started the project of the car," said Schlapkohl.

Ever since they were able to get the car running, Schlapkohl drives it to school, drawing attention from many students.

"Ever since driving the car, I have had people staring at my car as it goes by, mainly little kids who think the car is cool," said Schlapkohl.

Schlapkohl is excited to finish the



Jon Schlapkohl and his son Ethan are fixing up a 2002 Mustang GT.

"The car will definitely be rewarding when I'm done because it's going to be the exact way I want it and knowing that I put in the work to get it to that state will make it that much better," said Schlapkohl.

Durant adds 64 students from Davenport schools

By Kiyah Daily

Since the beginning of the school year, Durant has added the equivalent of an entire class of students because of policy changes in the Davenport school district, and many of those transfers may be for mask-related reasons.

"I think it [masks] played a factor," said Superintendent Joe Burnett. "In some of the parents I visited with, they brought it up, but we don't ask that on an individual basis."

Principal Joel Diederichs also said masks could have played a factor in so many students open enrolling from Davenport.

In May, Governor Kim Reynolds signed a law stating school districts could

not require anyone on school property to wear a mask. However, a later court ruling struck down that mandate, leaving that decision up to individual school districts.

In September, the Davenport school district became one district that required students to wear masks. As a result, Durant has gained 34 students since Davenport put that mask requirement into effect and 64 overall since the beginning of the school year.

"We're privileged here that we have not put that mandate in," Mr. Diederichs said. However, if students choose to wear a mask, they can if they want to, he said.

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Grade checks return at DHS

By Kayden Johnson

The infamous six-week grade checks have returned to Durant High School.

Six-week grade checks are a way to keep high school student-athletes eligible for competition in their sport.

These grade checks were removed during the 2020-2021 school year due to the nationwide COVID-19 pandemic because the state determined that no high school athlete could be ruled ineligible to play due to grades last year.

"I was happy to have all of the students here in person but because of the way the state handled the situation, some schools were in person and some schools completely online, it gave a lot of students a free year to slack off and compete without worrying about their grades," said principal and varsity football coach Joel Diederichs.

This year, things are back to normal.

If students have a failing grade at the six-week deadline, they will receive a suspension for one game or tournament for their sport. If the athletes have a failing grade by the end of the semester, they can receive up to a 30-day suspension, which can carry over to new sports seasons.

Because of the grade checks, Mr. Diederichs strongly believes that his athletes try harder academically.

"I think my athletes do try harder because they want to participate in the games every Friday," he said. "We, as a team, put in the work all summer long, lifting weights and having camps for our athletes. With our season only being eight weeks, as well, it's a pretty steep hill to get your starting spot back once you're gone for one game."

Football player Drake Shelangoski said the penalties can affect a season.

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