



SHCSD Article VII, Section 780 School Closure Public Hearing

January 14, 2026
6:30 pm
Southern Huntingdon County High School

Welcome Everyone

Format for tonight's meeting.



- Opening comments
- Presentation on background and context
- Analysis of options for closing Shade Gap Elementary
- Public comment
- A Court Stenographer will keep the minutes of this meeting
- The meeting will be recorded on video
- After this public hearing, the earliest the Board can vote on a decision would be April 15, 2026

Your presenters this evening:

- Mrs. Hillary Lambert, Superintendent
- Attorney Carl Beard, Beard Legal Group
- Mr. Adam Kerr, EI Associates



PA School Code. Section 780

- In the event of a permanent closing of a public school or substantially all of a school's facilities, the Board of School Directors shall hold a public hearing on the question not less than three months prior to the decision of the Board relating to the closing of the school. Notice of the hearing shall be given in a newspaper of general circulation in the school district at least 15 days prior to the date of such hearings.

PA School Code Section 1311

- “(a) The board of school directors of any school district may, on account of the small number of pupils in attendance, or the condition of the then existing school building, or for the purpose of better gradation and classification, or other reasons, close any one or more of the public schools in its district...”

How we got here.....

- A [2019 Feasibility Study](#) (EI Associates) was completed with the intention of assisting the School Board of Directors, staff, and community in the decision making process regarding the future utilization and disposition of its educational facilities.
- August 20, 2019 School Board of Directors approved the Resolution authorizing the Administration and EI Assoc. to proceed with the Schematic Design Phase for the Project outlined as Option 2 & 3 for the project known as the New Elementary School.
- October 15, 2019 School Board of Directors approved Option 3A of the 2019 Feasibility study. Option 3A is outlined as a New Elementary School detached from the existing HS/MS with a gym and separate cafeteria.

How we got here continued....

- May 17, 2022 School Board of Directors approved the Construction Document Phase for the SHC Elementary School and authorized the Administration and EI Assoc. to proceed with the release of the project for bidding.
- August 12, 2022 – Injunction was granted to ORJMA and the District is prohibited from adding any new connection to the Authority's Sewerage Treatment System.
- August 30, 2022 School Board of Directors approved to place a temporary hold on the bid requests by recalling and rescinding the District's Request for the Bids for the SHC Elementary School project.

How we got here continued....

- January 22, 2023 - Spring Farms Oil Release, Spring Farm students were immediately relocated to the HS/MS Building.
- March 15, 2023 – Public meeting to discuss configuration for 2023-24 SY. Option 1: Move 4th & 5th grade to the HS/MS or Option 2: Spring Farms elementary will remain at the HS/MS. Option 2 was selected.
- November 3, 2025 – Public meeting to discuss the financial status of the District and possible reconfiguration.

Why We are Here

- Declining enrollment
- Rising operating costs
- Building infrastructure issues
- Limited revenue growth



Topics of Discussion:



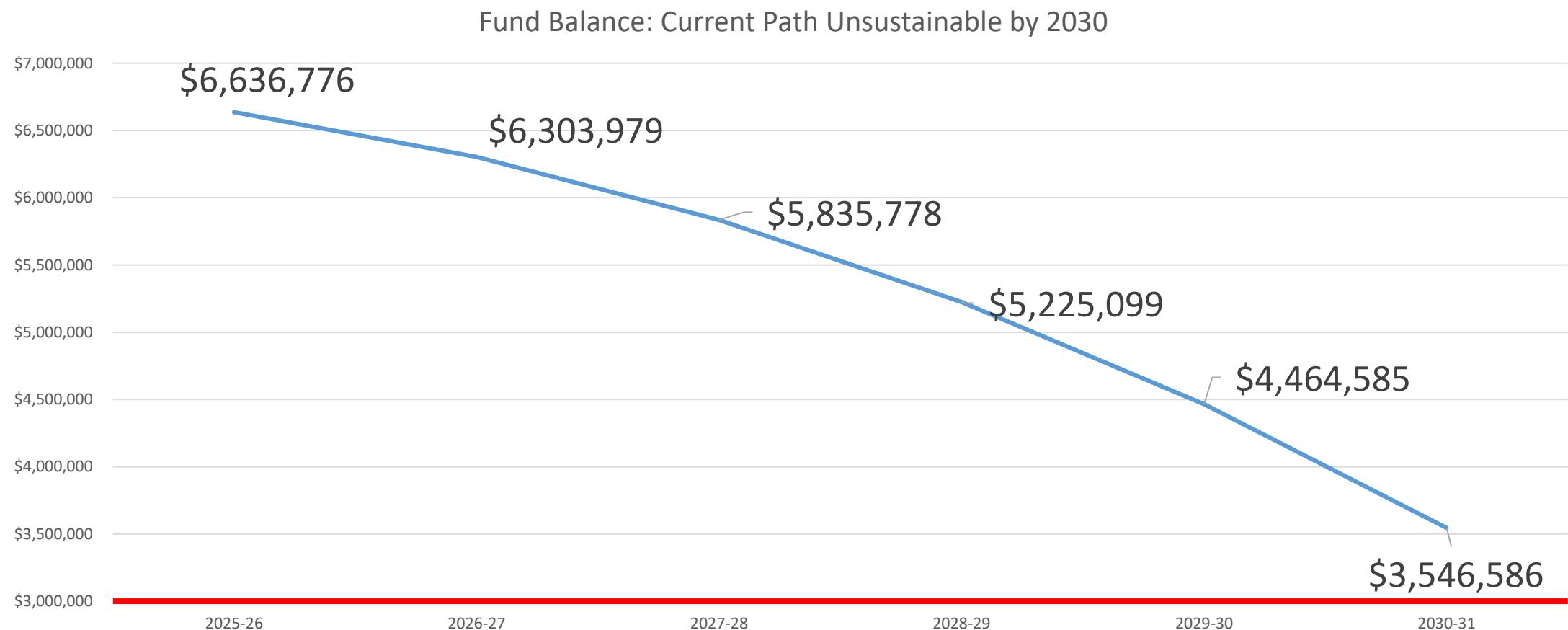
- Current Financial Status of the District
- Declining Enrollment
- Sewage Restrictions
- Options that have been considered
- Reconfiguration Recommendation
 - Educational Benefits
 - Operating Cost Savings
- Renovations
- HS/MS Improvement Recommendations for elementary students

Current Financial Status of the District

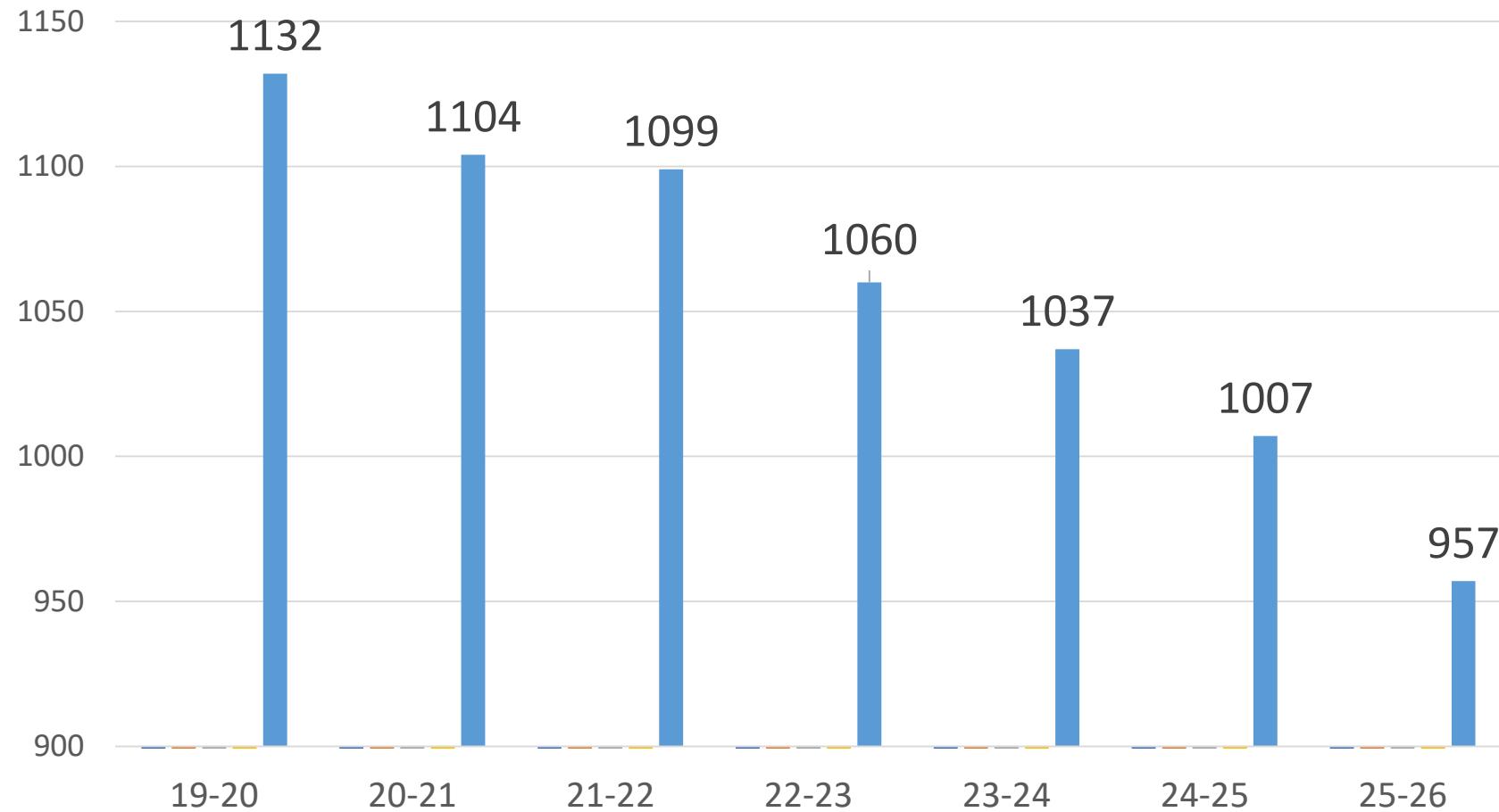


- FY 2024-25: Fund balance decreased by **(\$180K)**
 - Current Fund balance is \$6,636,776
- Revenue: Local, State, Federal
 - State & Federal - minimal increases, unless PA starts to fully fund districts
 - Local RE Taxes: 1 mill = \$106,000
- Expense drivers (3 year total)
 - Salaries –\$852,000 (4.5%)
 - Healthcare –\$632,000 (12.5%)
 - Charter Schools – \$1.1 million annually
- No capital reserve or contingency funds included in FY 2025-26

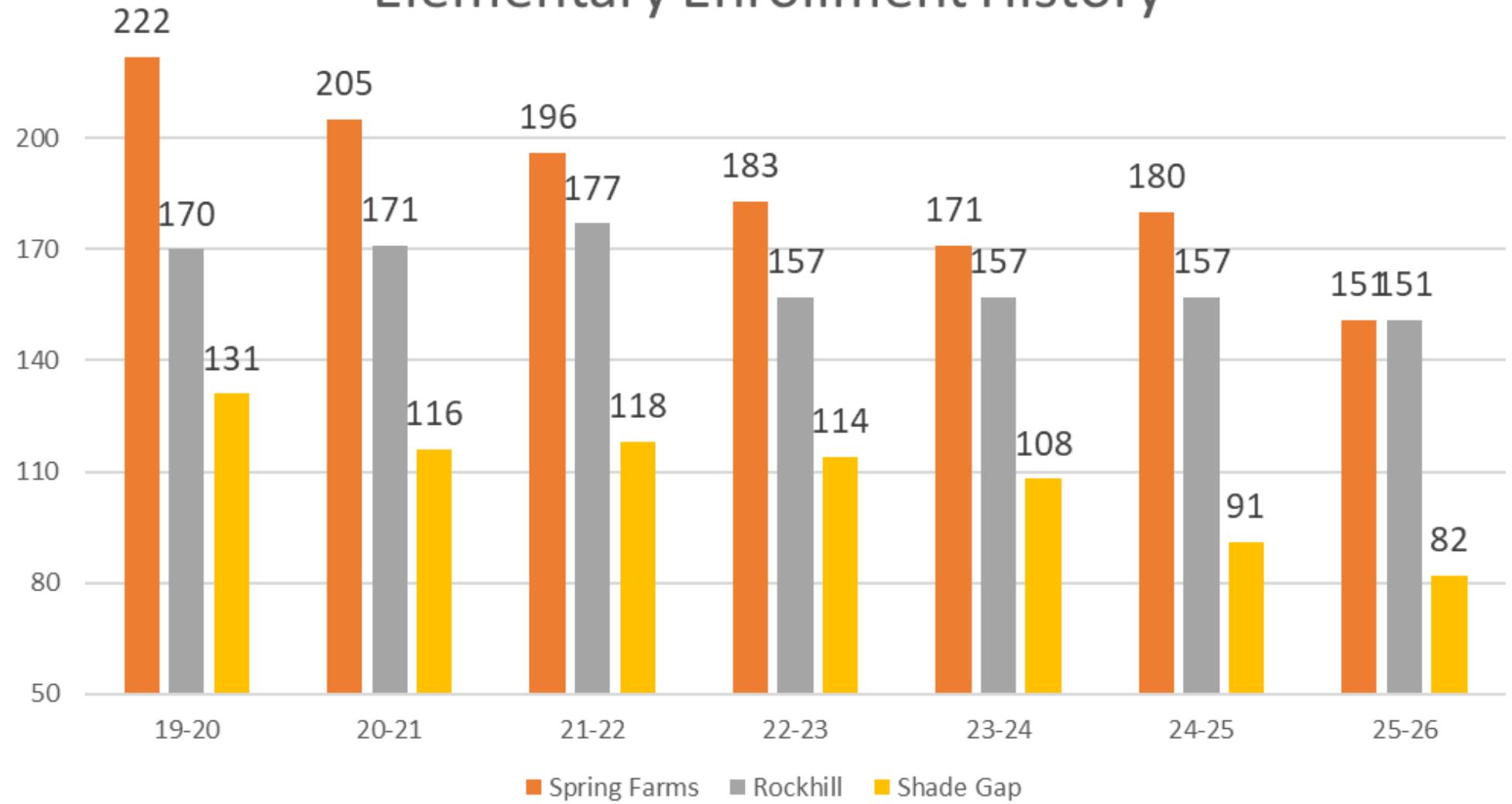
Financial Status: 5 Year Projection



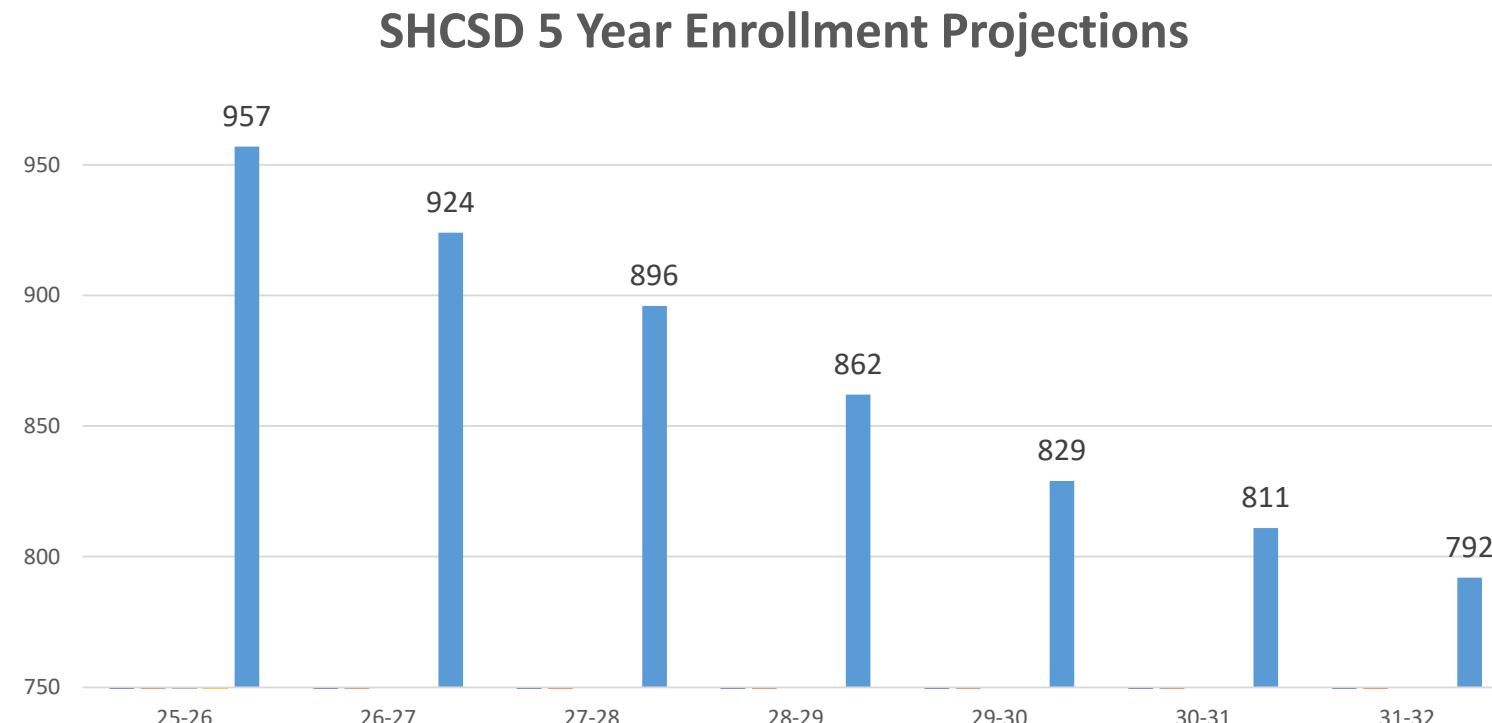
SHCSD Enrollment History



Elementary Enrollment History



Declining Enrollment Projections



- Source: PDE

Sewage Restrictions:

- 2015 – Cromwell expanded their lines, DEP then required the District to abandon our onsite treatment facility and to connect with Cromwell
- August 12, 2022 – Injunction was granted to ORJMA and the District is prohibited from adding any new connection to the Authority's Sewerage Treatment System.
- HS/MS PDE Total Student Capacity – 926
 - Current Enrollment (including SF students) - 724
- Rockhill PDE Total Student Capacity – 250 students
 - Current enrollment – 151 students

Spring Farms Elementary Update



- The DEP disapproved the Final Report on November 6, 2025 based on 2 deficiencies:
 - Groundwater beneath the site has not been adequately characterized and the requirements of Chapter 250.204(b-e) and Chapter 250.312 have not been met.
 - Engineers will install 2 additional monitoring wells on the property to try and locate the heating oil. Wells are to be installed in early 2026 and will be sampled with the rest of the site monitoring wells for at least 2 quarters.
 - Vapor sample data is over 18 months old. The DEP recommends at least 1 additional complete round of samples.
 - Engineers will collect 1 additional round of soil vapor samples and indoor air samples.

Options that have been considered:



- Adding elementary wing to HS/MS with cafeteria/gymnasium
 - Annual operational savings of \$842,500
 - Not feasible due to sewer injunction
- Remodeling Shade Gap & Rockhill, realign SG lines to capture more RH students, all Spring Farms students will move to RH
 - Annual operational savings of \$75,000 (Close Spring Farms)
 - Estimated cost of upgrades \$7.2 million (SG & RH)
 - Challenges: no operational savings, 10-12 empty classrooms at the HS/MS

Options that have been considered:

- Remodel/additions to SG to become a KG-3rd grade building, 4th & 5th grades will move to the HS/MS building
 - Annual operational savings of \$653,000 (Close RH)
 - Estimated cost of upgrades \$6.0 million (SG only)
 - Challenges: location, too small (only 9 classrooms)
- Rockhill becomes a KG-2nd grade building, 3rd-5th grade will come to the HS/MS building, upgrades to RH and HS/MS will be completed
 - Annual operational savings of \$842,500 (Close SG)
 - Estimated cost of upgrades \$3.9 million
 - Challenges: renovations needed if long-term solution



Reconfiguration Recommendation for next SY

- Turn Rockhill into a KG-2nd Grade building (190 students)
 - Average grade size is 63 students
 - 4 classes per grade, 15-17 students per class
- 3rd-5th grade will come to the HS/MS (193 students)
 - Average grade size is 65 students
 - 3 classes per grade, 21-22 students per class
- This reconfiguration plan allows the District to stay under the PDE total student capacity for Rockhill and the HS/MS and provide educational benefits.

Educational Benefits



- Curriculum Consistency & Alignment
 - Grade level collaboration among faculty enhances consistency of curriculum
 - Vertical alignment supports consistent learning progress across grades and enhances student achievements and outcomes
- Specialized instructional focus
 - Faculty can specialize in either primary or intermediate instruction
 - Reading specialists and special education faculty will have a more narrow focus
 - Departmentalize for grades 3rd – 5th
- Balanced class sizes & staffing flexibility
 - Current class sizes range from 10 students to 20 students

Yearly Operating Costs:



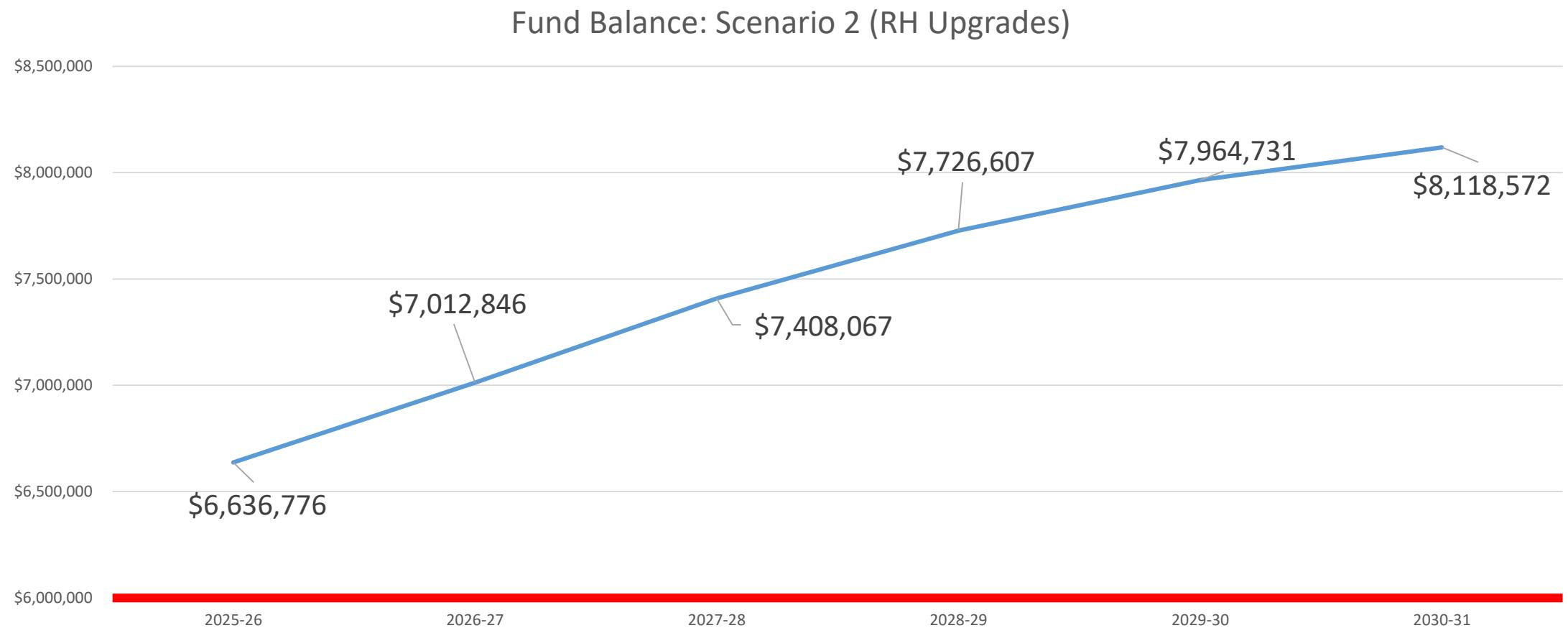
- Operating Costs – electricity, fuel, daily maintenance, garbage, etc.
- Shade Gap Elementary
 - \$227,500 annual operating & support staff costs
- Spring Farms Elementary
 - \$75,000 annual operating costs
- Optimizing staffing through natural transitions
 - Estimated savings of \$540,000
- Total Yearly Savings: \$842,500

Rockhill Upgrades/Renovations



- New electrical
- Zoned DOAS system (handles ventilation and humidity control)
- Air conditioning
- LED Lighting
- Brick Repointing & New Sealants
- Possibly new windows and entrance
- Total Costs: \$3.9 million (estimated)
 - 15 Year Loan, annual payment \$390,000

Financial Status: Consolidation/RH Upgrades



HS/MS Improvements for 3rd-5th grades



- New playground equipment installed
- Adjust morning entrance and breakfast procedures
- Dedicated classroom for art, music, library
- Still under consideration is the “school within a school” concept that was presented by the public

Question & Answer Session



- Please share questions and feedback with the Board and administration