



TO: Board of Education
Dr. Lisa Leali, Superintendent

FROM: Jay Kahn, Chief School Business Official

DATE: September 29, 2026

RE: School Maintenance Grant – LBMS Theater Sound System

Recommendation

Administration recommends that the Board approve, and authorize the Chief School Business Official to submit, an application for a School Maintenance Project Grant in the amount of \$50,000 and reserve local funds in the amount of \$50,000 to meet the matching requirement. The grant will fund a ~\$150 thousand stage sound and lighting update at the Lake Bluff Middle School.

Background

The highlight of each school year is the Lake Bluff Middle School musical, which takes place every spring. We consistently have 60%-70% of the entire student body participating, from set design and building, to lighting and sound, and of course, performing on stage.

The lighting and sound equipment which enables our high-quality production is antiquated and inadequate. Unfortunately, all this equipment has come due to be replaced all at once.

Sound System

Our current sound system was installed in 2004. We have issues with connectivity and sound quality, which makes it hard to hear the performers. Of the 24 microphones, only 21 can be used at the same time. The frequency range of the microphones we are using was retired by the FCC in 2018, and the body packs and receivers are no longer sold and cannot be replaced if they break.

Lighting System

The current system was installed in 2007. It is a traditional system with instruments using incandescent light bulbs. The manufacture of these light bulbs was banned by the Department of Energy August 1, 2023 as they are energy inefficient, so replacement bulbs are no longer available. The current LED systems are state of the art, much more energy efficient, and safer due to their low heat output.

Current Situation

This project was not specifically budgeted for this year, but there is a placeholder in the budget that would cover the cost of the sound system. We would like to replace the sound equipment prior to the musical in April due to the very poor sound quality. The stage lighting is not as pressing and could be done next fiscal year, or earlier if funds allow.

Tonight's approval is for the grant application only.