



Wisconsin Heights School District

AT A CROSSROADS

An Update for the Success of our Facilities & our Future

June 2020, Citizens Update

The Wisconsin Heights School District is committed to providing exceptional education for all students. Guided by strategic priorities identified by the community, key District initiatives include community collaboration, attracting and retaining staff, proactive and positive district marketing, community partnerships, maintaining small class sizes, and innovative teaching styles. The Board and leadership team continually monitor progress to lead the District toward continuous improvement.

As part of this overall effort, the District is investigating a one-site school campus solution.

What is the Challenge?

The Wisconsin Heights School District is at a crossroads. The Black Earth and Mazomanie Elementary School buildings need significant financial investment to update the infrastructure of those schools. Both schools need updated electrical systems, roofs, fire systems, safe entrances, accessible restrooms, and improved kitchen areas.

The middle and high schools need updated heating, ventilation and cooling systems to make facilities more useful for school and community use year-round. **A complete facilities report is available on the district website.**

Why Now?

While we are in the middle of unprecedented times, this project began three years ago. Our school building maintenance and remodeling needs continue. Therefore, the Board is moving forward with investigating the options.

With a clear plan for facilities, we can:

- Thoughtfully design appropriate space for maximum educational benefit;
- Avoid investments in repairing buildings that may possibly be taken offline in the future, and reallocate limited funds to educational programming;
- Confidently use attrition for future staffing decisions;
- Accommodate future enrollment growth.

What has been done?



Future Search

The District asked the community what their priorities were for the future of the schools. The input has provided direction to the district's improvement efforts.



Facilities Study

The Board conducted a facilities study in 2018, which identified a cost-efficient option to build an elementary wing onto the existing middle/high school, creating a single campus for all students.



Enrollment Study

A 2018 enrollment study by the UW Madison Population Lab indicates slow enrollment growth over the next decade.



Community Survey

The Board sought community input via survey in April, 2020. Survey respondents agreed with creating a one-campus school district. The complete survey results are on the District's website.



Wisconsin Heights School District

Community Involvement: Next Steps

ANALYZE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

The Board of Education and the leadership team continue to analyze information about potential facilities plans.

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

District staff and the community are invited to attend a "Virtual Community Conversation" to learn more about potential plans for the elementary wing, and provide feedback.

STAFF SESSIONS:

June 10 | 9:00 a.m.

June 10 | 3:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY SESSIONS:

June 10 | 10:30 a.m.

June 10 | 6:00 p.m.

June 16 | 1:00 p.m.

Visit our website to access the Zoom meeting links for the Virtual meetings listed above.

PROPOSAL

In August, the Board of Education will develop a facility proposal based on community input, determine a timeline, and continue to inform the community.



Jordan Sinz, District Administrator
jsinz@wisheights.k12.wi.us



www.facebook.com/VanguardPride

Why is an Elementary Wing Being Considered as an Option?

There are several reasons why a new elementary wing is being considered:

Maintaining fewer buildings and grounds saves on annual operational expenses.

Repairing the two existing elementary schools does not modernize the facilities yet costs nearly as much as building a new wing onto the middle/high school.

A new wing provides updated learning environments appropriate for today's students, such as more room for one-on-one instruction; electricity and infrastructure for technology use; and space for teachers and learners to work in small or large groups.

Enrollment projections, educational needs, traffic, and other concerns can all be addressed during the design of the elementary wing.

56% of survey respondents indicated they would support the one-campus district.

What is the Difference Between an Operational Referendum and a Capital Referendum?

An Operating Referendum supports the annual, day-to-day costs to maintain the educational programs and services of the district, including but not limited to staffing, supplies, bussing, food service, maintenance, utilities, etc. This type of referendum is necessary when the funds that districts collect for operations from state and local sources, and which are limited by the State of Wisconsin's revenue formula for school districts, are not enough to sustain educational programs, staffing, and services.

Wisconsin Heights School District has been very fortunate that over the long-term, residents have supported its local schools by approving an operational referendum that provides additional financial support for the day-to-day operation of the schools.

Eighty percent of schools in Wisconsin have pursued an operating referendum from their communities.

A Capital Referendum asks voter approval so that the Board of Education may borrow money to invest in large assets, such as building an elementary wing, which cannot be paid for within an annual budget. Capital improvements almost always involve borrowing over a certain period of time, such as 10, 20, or 30 years. A capital referendum, if requested from the voters, would fund the building addition.