



Wisconsin Heights School District **REACHING NEW HEIGHTS**

A Citizens Update About School Facilities

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 attracting and retaining staff, proactive and positive district marketing, community partnerships, maintaining small class sizes, and innovative teaching styles. The Board of Education and leadership team monitor the District's progress toward continuous improvement. As part of this effort, the Board is pursuing a facility plan to address aging buildings and infrastructure and replacing building equipment.

What Facilities Projects Are Currently Being Considered?

The Board held a workshop in July to determine if they will move toward a November 3 referendum. The Board will make its final decision in August. They are considering two questions for the November 3 ballot to:

1. Add an elementary wing addition to the Middle/High School, replacement of HVAC, and updated interior finishes at the Middle/High School.
2. Add an auditorium addition to the Middle/High School.

With a successful capital referendum to build the elementary wing and repair the Middle/High School the District could:

- Reduce operational expenses by operating fewer school buildings;
- Offer modern elementary learning facilities for all students;
- Replace needed HVAC equipment at the Middle/High School.

A new auditorium at the High School would enhance the educational programming in the arts and extend the community's use of the schools for programs and events.

Without a capital referendum to support facilities, costly repairs might mean cuts to educational programs and services for years to come as the District will be forced to redirect annual operating dollars to urgent maintenance and repairs, without updates to its learning facilities.

With a clear plan for facilities, the District can:

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

How the Board has gathered information



Future Search



Facilities Study



Enrollment Study



Community Survey



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Next Steps

The Board of Education is considering two potential questions for referendum. The first question is for capitol improvements for a new elementary wing, HVAC improvements, and interior finish updates to the existing Middle School/High School. The second question would include the addition of an auditorium to the Middle School/High School.

The Board of Education will consider a capitol referendum to support a school facilities plan at its August 24, 2020 regular Board of Education meeting.

If they approve a capitol referendum, it will appear on the November 3, 2020 ballot for voters to decide. If approved, the school district will prepare additional information for the public. Please stay tuned.



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FAQs

What is the Challenge?

The District's vision is to maintain and improve existing educational programming for students. It already operates with a lean annual budget, thankfully supported by an operating referendum provided by the voters.

There hasn't been a capital referendum to support buildings since 1995. While school maintenance staff perform excellent ongoing maintenance, equipment and roofs wear out. The Black Earth and Mazomanie Elementary School buildings need significant financial investment to address roofs, electrical systems, safe entrances, accessible bathrooms, and kitchens. The Middle/High School needs heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment.

Why Now?

While we are in the middle of unprecedented times, this project began three years ago. The Board is responsible for maintaining district facilities and school building maintenance and remodeling needs remain.

Why Consider a New Auditorium?

A new auditorium would greatly enhance the District's fine arts offerings by providing space for concerts, theatrical performances and presentations as well as for guest speakers and assemblies. The auditorium would be available for community use as well, providing space for local performing arts groups. Features would include soft tier seating for approximately 500, a lighting and sound booth, an orchestra area, scene shops, dressing rooms and a lobby or commons.

The Board's final decision is anticipated at its August 24 regular Board of Education meeting.