

NRHEG Public School

Independent School District No. 2168



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Our Mission

Empowering students with knowledge and skills to succeed.

Our Vision

To be the school district of choice, inspiring excellence in academics, arts, and activities.

Facility Planning for the Future

Dale Carlson, Superintendent

November 2017

Our vision as a school community is to *be the school district of choice, inspiring excellence in academics, arts, and activities*. We strive to do this every day by *empowering students with knowledge and skills to succeed*.

The Board of Education (BOE) approved three work goals for 2017-2018 including:

Goal 1 (Finance): By July 1, 2018, develop, adopt, and annually update a three-year budget projection plan that takes into account: enrollment projections; anticipated state and federal funding increases; and assumptions on expenditure increases.

Goal 2 (Facilities): By July 1, 2018, develop District master plan to address the adequacy and capacity of the NRHEG School District facilities for the next 5, 10, and 20 years.

Goal 3 (Communication & Marketing): By July 1, 2018, develop and implement a plan to increase the number of school/community partnerships focused on accomplishing its mission and vision statements

As the BOE continues its work on achieving the second goal focused on developing a facility plan for the next 5, 10, and 20 years, I thought I would provide an update on the Board's progress in addressing facility needs now and in the future.

The BOE administered a community-wide survey in January 2016 in order to gather information from residents and staff to be used in developing a strategic plan for the School District including facility planning. The survey was also intended to provide the BOE insight into the unsuccessful June 2015 referendum vote. There was a high response rate to the survey that asked several questions about the facility needs of the School District as the BOE was interested in learning more about the response of voters that resulted in the unsuccessful referendum. The survey results showed:

- Majority of respondents believed the School District should explore a referendum to update and renovate the schools

Dale N. Carlson, Superintendent

David A. Bunn, High School Principal

Douglas A. Anderson, Elementary Principal

- 77% of respondents felt the School District should address facility needs within the next one to five years
- Adding and remodeling classrooms including Science labs, improving school security, and improving air quality through dehumidification were identified as priorities
- Majority of respondents who were not in favor of the June 2015 referendum identified the proposal for a new gymnasium and the tax impact as important to their decision

Following the completion of the survey, the BOE facilitated a strategic planning process that involved a task force consisting of staff, students, parents, and residents from our four communities. The BOE approved the recommended plan in May 2016 that included six priority or focus areas including the **Facilities Focus Area** that ensures the *facilities and infrastructure of the school district are designed to optimize staff performance and student learning in a safe, sustainable, and attractive environment.*

In the fall of 2016, the BOE approved a 2016-2017 work goal to complete an assessment of all district facilities by September 2017, and use the information from the assessment to determine short- and long-term facility needs as the next step responding to the June 2015 referendum vote, Community Survey results, and the development of the Strategic Plan.

In January 2017, the BOE approved an agreement to partner with ISG, an architecture and engineering firm based out of Mankato, to conduct a thorough assessment of all District facilities. The purpose of the assessment was to assist the BOE with:

1. Planning for maintenance and improvement to school facilities
2. Informing residents of facility needs
3. Prioritizing long- and short-term projects
4. Identifying opportunities to enhance learning environments
5. Developing strategies for financial planning
6. Developing and enhancing a long- and short-term facilities maintenance plan

At a special BOE work session held on September 20, 2017, the BOE was presented with the findings of the facility study by ISG. The report provides a detailed summary of the physical conditions of our facilities and identifies suggested prioritized actions to address a number of maintenance-related improvements to our existing facilities.

Last week on November 8, the BOE held a second work session to begin the process of *developing a master plan to address the adequacy and capacity of the NRHEG School District facilities for the next 5, 10, and 20 years.* At the work session, the BOE determined to take the following next steps.

1. Have administration work with staff to identify and develop educational programming needs for the next 5, 10, and 20 years to ensure our students have the skills and knowledge to prepare them for success.
2. Begin to identify and prioritize maintenance-related issues or deficiencies from the Facility Assessment to be included in the District's 10-year Long Term Facility Maintenance (LTFM) plan
3. Develop a sequence of events along with a potential timeline describing a plan that will assist the BOE in making decisions how to proceed in meeting its goal of developing a plan to address facility needs now and in the future.

Your BOE is committed to providing our students, staff, and communities with quality educational facilities. At the same time, the BOE believes this process deserves a high level of scrutiny, examination, and review to ensure that maintenance-related deficiencies and improvements, along with facility improvements based on student learning needs will be beneficial for our students and communities for

many years into the future. I commend the BOE for taking a thoughtful and systematic approach to the facility planning process.

Your involvement and engagement in this important process is critical. Together, we have the shared responsibility of determining the future of the children throughout our four communities by providing them with high quality educational programs as well as high quality educational facilities. There will be more information in the coming weeks and months on how you can be an active participant in this important conversation as we plan for the future.

A reminder that the School Board conducts its regular monthly meeting on the third Monday of each month. The location of the meeting is rotated monthly between the NRHEG Secondary School Media Center in New Richland and the NRHEG Elementary School Media Center in Ellendale. The November 20, 2017, School Board meeting will be at the Elementary School beginning at 6:30 pm., and the December 18, 2017, School Board meeting will be at the Secondary School beginning at 6:30 pm. The annual Truth and Taxation public meeting will begin at 6:00 pm on December 18 prior to the start of the regular School Board meeting.

We celebrate together in the accomplishments of our students because we are in this journey together as a school community. Thank you for all you do to support NRHEG Public Schools and our students!