

McFarland School District going to November Referendum for Facilities and Operations

On Monday, August 29 the McFarland School Board unanimously approved three referendum questions for the November 2016 ballot.

Facilities Improvements

Question 1 is for \$65,150,000 in District-wide facilities improvements. Those facilities improvements include the following:

- renovations and additions to, or replacement of, the K-2 Elementary Campus
- additions to Waubesa Intermediate School
- renovations and additions to Indian Mound Middle School
- renovations and additions to McFarland High School, including replacement of the McFarland High School auditorium, pool and certain athletic facilities

The improvements are needed to address the following:

- Improve aging, under-sized and inefficient school **facilities**
- Create **flexible** learning spaces
- Improve **accessibility** for students, staff and community
- **Plan** for the **future**

Superintendent Andrew Briddell notes, “The entire facilities planning process is community driven. From the original petition in 2013, to our committee work throughout the 2015-16 school year, to our survey results this summer, our community has expressed a strong desire for the district to address its long term facilities needs with a strong plan for the future.”

The facilities referendum is more than three years in the making, beginning with a community petition signed by approximately 400 individuals in March 2013. Approximately 80 individuals then participated in committee work and nearly 700 people participated in a community-wide survey to give the district input and feedback. This summer, the district used that feedback to clarify and revise its facilities plans, and is now ready to bring this referendum to the community in November.

Operational Costs

Question 2 is for additional funding to operate expanded facilities. This enables the school district to use \$100,000 in additional funding beginning in 2017-18, and \$132,000 in additional funding beginning in 2018-19 to operate the 200,000 additional sq. ft. of facility space.

Question 3 is for additional operational funding to maintain current levels of education programming.

This enables the School District to maintain current programming levels (i.e., class sizes, comprehensive curriculum, and program structure). This phased increase to exceed the State of Wisconsin imposed revenue cap consists of the following: \$437,000 in 2017-2018; \$397,000 in 2018-19; and \$270,000 in 2019-20. It represents an average 1% annual increase over the State imposed revenue cap.

Business Manager Jeff Mahoney notes, "Approval to exceed the current State imposed revenue cap limit is needed to combat the financial conditions of the last 6 years, as annual inflation has had a cumulative increase of 10%, yet per pupil revenue authority has decreased by over 3% during the same time frame. During this time spending cuts have been made and other revenue sources have plateaued. Without increased revenue authority, class sizes, comprehensive curriculum, and current program structure will need to be altered."

Next Steps

The district is planning a variety of community engagement opportunities including holding open houses, sending mailers, and other communications efforts in the coming weeks.

Please visit www.mcfarland.k12.wi.us for updates or contact Superintendent Andrew Briddell at (608) 838-4550 for more information.