



June 2, 2025

Rich Schneider, Superintendent  
Yellow Medicine East Public School District, ISD #2190-01  
450 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Granite Falls, MN 56241-1399

Dear Superintendent Schneider:

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires a review and comment statement on the educational and economic advisability of your proposed school construction project. Information supplied by your school district and from Minnesota Department of Education sources is the basis of this review and comment. With this positive review and comment, voter and school board approval is required for Yellow Medicine East Public School District, Independent School District #2190-01, to proceed with the proposed projects.

***The district shall publish a summary of the review and comment statement (the final page) in the legal newspaper of the district at least 48 days, but not more than 70 days, prior to holding a referendum or soliciting any bids for the construction, expansion, or remodeling of an educational facility.*** The department may request a statement certifying the publication, and require the submission, review, and approval of preliminary and final construction plans.

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires the commissioner to include comments from residents of the school district in the review and comment. As of the date of this letter, no public comments have been received. In addition, Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires the school board hold a public meeting to discuss the review and comment prior to the date of the election.***

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires that a school district, prior to occupying a new or renovated facility after July 1, 2002, must submit a certification prepared by a system inspector to the commissioner and the building code official that will provide an occupancy permit.*** The certification must verify that the facility's installed or modified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system operates according to design specifications and code, a system for monitoring outdoor airflow and total airflow of ventilation systems has been installed, and any installed or modified heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system provides an indoor air quality filtration system that meets ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Standard 52.1.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Kubesh, Education Finance specialist, at 651-582-8319 or [chris.kubesh@state.mn.us](mailto:chris.kubesh@state.mn.us). Thank you for working with us to improve school facilities for Minnesota students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Willie L. Jett II'.

Willie L. Jett II  
Commissioner

cc: Dawn Odegard, School Board Chair

Enclosure

**The Commissioner of the Department of Education  
Review and Comment on the School Construction  
Proposal of Yellow Medicine East Public School District, ISD #2190-01**

A review and comment must be provided on a school district construction project proposal before the district conducts a referendum, solicits bids, or issues bonds for the project. A project proposal has been submitted for review and comment according to requirements set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, subdivisions 9 and 10, and Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72. The district provides the following information:

1. The geographic area and population to be served:
  - a. preschool through grade 12 student enrollment for the past five years, and
  - b. student enrollment projections for the next five years.
2. A list of existing school facilities:
  - a. by year constructed,
  - b. their uses, and
  - c. an assessment of the extent to which alternate facilities are available within school district boundaries and in adjacent school districts.
3. A list of specific deficiencies of the facility:
  - a. demonstrating the need for a new or renovated facility to be provided,
  - b. the process used to determine the deficiencies,
  - c. a list of those deficiencies that will and will not be addressed by the proposed projects,
  - d. a list of specific benefits that the new or renovated facility will provide to students, teachers, and community users served by the facility.
4. A description of the project, including:
  - a. specifications of site and outdoor space acreage,
  - b. square footage allocations for classrooms, laboratories and support spaces,
  - c. estimated expenditures for major portions of the project,
  - d. estimated changes in facility operating costs, and
  - e. dates the project will begin and be completed.
5. A specification of the source of project financing, including:
  - a. applicable statutory citations,
  - b. the scheduled date for a bond issue or school board action,
  - c. a schedule of payments, including debt service equalization aid, and
  - d. the effect of a bond issue on local property taxes by property class and valuation.
6. Documentation obligating the school district and contractors to comply with the following items:
  - a. Minnesota Statutes, section 471.345 governing municipal contracts,
  - b. sustainable design,
  - c. school facility commissioning under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72, certifying the plans and designs for heating, ventilating, air conditioning and air filtration for an extensively renovated or new facility meet or exceed current code standards, including ASHRAE air filtration Standard 52.1,
  - d. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) acoustical performance criteria, design requirements and guidelines for schools on maximum background noise levels and reverberation times,
  - e. state fire code,
  - f. chapter 326B governing building codes, and
  - g. consultation with affected government units about the impact of the project on utilities, roads, sewers, sidewalks, retention ponds, school bus and automobile traffic, access to mass transit and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Description of Proposed School Construction Project

Yellow Medicine East Public School District, ISD #2190-01, is proposing a single question referendum on August 12, 2025, that would authorize \$74.395 million in bonding authority to finance major improvements to their existing PK-12 facilities in Granite Falls. The district currently operates an elementary and middle/high school on a single campus. The proposed project includes the demolition of the entire 58,850 square foot elementary school and 105,845 square feet of the middle/high school. The demolished building space would be replaced by 145,080 square feet of new building space on the middle/high school.

The largest project components are the building additions. Other proposed projects include minor renovations, deferred maintenance and HVAC improvements to the existing middle/high school building. Proposed site improvements include: track replacement, bleacher and lighting upgrades, irrigation, an elementary playground area, a new parking lot and sidewalk repairs.

The projects proposed would be scheduled for completion in calendar years 2027 and 2028. Cost estimates by project component are as follows:

<u>New Construction:</u>		<u>Site Improvements:</u>	
HS Classrooms / Admin Offices / Auditorium	\$21,120,000	New Parking Lot	\$750,000
Secure Entry / Lunchroom / Kitchen	\$6,080,000	Track Replacement	\$600,000
Elem & Early Learning Classrooms / Gym	\$19,200,000	Concession Stand / Ticket Gate	\$500,000
	<b>\$46,400,000</b>	New Elementary Playground	\$400,000
<u>Existing Building Upgrades:</u>		Football Field Lighting Replacement	\$375,000
Demo Existing Elementary Space	\$1,956,000	Monument Sign / Video Display	\$150,000
HVAC Improvements	\$1,382,900	Visitor Bleachers	\$106,000
Space Relocation / Renovations	\$1,136,250	Ballfield Irrigation	\$92,750
Roof Replacement	\$637,600	Sidewalk Replacement	\$50,000
Asbestos Abatement	\$522,550		<b>\$3,023,750</b>
Restrooms	\$454,500	<u>Other Project Costs:</u>	
Locker Room Showers	\$367,200	Fees, Permits & Services	\$8,200,083
Fire Alarm	\$352,000	Contingencies	\$7,096,041
Theater Equipment	\$301,400	FF&E	\$1,978,726
Gym Bleachers	\$300,000	Bond Issuance	\$867,421
Gym Floor Replacement	\$286,000		<b>\$18,142,271</b>
	<b>\$7,696,400</b>		
		<b>Total - Project Cost Estimate</b>	<b>\$75,262,421</b>

The district had 589 K-12 students enrolled for the 2024-25 school year and is projecting stable enrollment over the next five years. However, the long-term enrollment trend for the district has been declining since their 1995 consolidation when the district had nearly 1,400 students. The district is also losing a significant number of students via open enrollment. For the 2024-25 school year, 100 students open enrolled into the district and 377 resident students open enrolled out to neighboring school districts.

The district has supplied operational cost estimates for the proposed projects and expects to save around \$100,000 per year operationally with the proposed building upgrades. If the bond referendum is successful and bonds are sold, the debt service on the bonds will be eligible for debt service equalization under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.53, subdivision 3, if the bond schedule is approved. The amount of debt service equalization aid, if any, the district receives is determined annually and is dependent upon property wealth, student population, and other statutory requirements.

### **Review and Comment Statement**

Based on the department's analysis of the school district's required documentation and other pertinent information from sources of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education provides a positive review and comment.

### **Additional Information is Available**

Persons desiring additional information regarding this proposal should contact the school district superintendent's office.



Willie L. Jett II  
Commissioner

June 2, 2025