



To: Board of Education, Wausau School District
From: Mark Roffers, AICP, Planning Consultant
Date: September 17, 2024
Re: Progress Update on Elementary Facilities Planning Effort

This memo is intended as an update on the efforts of the Elementary Facility Plan Citizen Task Force in fulfilling its charge. In summary, that charge is to recommend one or two preferred elementary school facility options by the end of 2024, including advice on whether the number of elementary schools in the District should be reduced and if so, then how, where, and when.

As reflected on the attached project timeline, the Task Force has now met four times, with the fifth meeting planned for Wednesday. Over the summer, the Task Force gained knowledge to help fulfill its charge. We also shared that charge and option evaluation criteria—both of which the Board had approved for the Task Force to use.

The Task Force has generally been focused on its charge. We have been asked on a few occasions whether the Task Force may consider options that shift 5th graders to middle schools. In response, we have noted that adjusting middle schools is not within the Board's charge. We have also shared challenges with school capacity and configuration, educational programming, and social development that would result. We welcome any Board reaffirmation, adjustment, or questioning of this guidance.

At its September 11th meeting, the Task Force appeared to generally come together on a future facility option that would close two or perhaps three elementary schools. Specific schools were not (yet) discussed. A number of members and small groups discussed phasing of closures, and a few broached the possibility of building a replacement school as part of a consolidation plan. We will spend the September 25th meeting securing the Task Force's broad direction and identifying other components of a facility recommendation that the Task Force wants to pursue further, before beginning our discussion of specific schools to consider for closure/consolidation.

There has been discussion at most Task Force meetings on early childhood education and care, including related to 4K and the potential for wrap-around care at schools. At the next meeting, we will learn whether this idea has traction among a number of Task Force members or just a few. Before then, we intend to provide the Task Force with a bit more background on the subject and on realistic options. We are also attempting to reconcile interest in wrap-around care with the Task Force's charge, and will welcome any Board guidance on this matter.

I have a prior meeting commitment Monday evening, so unfortunately will not be able to attend the Board meeting. The Board can share any input with the District's administrative team. I will attend the October 14th meeting to provide a further update, answer questions, and get direction as needed.



Wausau School District

Project Timeline Enrollment Projections and Facility Planning

PROJECT PHASES AND TASKS	2024												2025	
	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN			
Phase 1 - Detailed Long Range Enrollment Projections														
Task 1.1: Assemble Data and Base Mapping														
Task 1.2: Analyze Housing and Community Growth and Change														
Task 1.3: Map District Schools, Attendance Areas, and Neighborhoods														
Task 1.4: Analyze Demographic and Housing Conditions and Trends														
Task 1.5: Project Housing Unit Growth														
Task 1.6: Project Resident and Total Student Enrollment Change														
Task 1.7: Prepare Projections Report and Presentation					7/10									
Task 1.8: Phase 1 Interaction and Project Management with District Staff & Officials														
Phase 2 - Facility Options Analysis and Guidance														
Task 2.1: Assist with Initial Process Steps														
Task 2.2: Support Task Force and Staff Meetings				6/12		8/21	9/11	9/25	10/9	10/30	11/13	12/4		
Task 2.3: Establish, Map, and Evaluate Different School Facility Options														
Task 2.4: Refine, Map, and Evaluate Preferred School Facility Option														
Task 2.5: Phase 2 Interaction and Project Management with District Staff & Officials														

Agendas for Wausau School District Elementary Facility Plan Citizen Task Force meetings are generally intended as follows:

- 6/12 - Welcome, introductions, orientation, procedures, norms, initial input and questions
- 7/10 - Student enrollment projections; school building capacities and conditions; delivery and options for 4K programming
- 8/21 - Educational policy & programming overview; financial & transportation overview; review of facility option evaluation criteria
- 9/11 & 9/25 - Consider broad closure/consolidation scenarios and complete initial screen of candidate schools
- 10/9 to 11/13 - Presentation, evaluation, and narrowing of different specific elementary school facility options
- 12/4 - Recommendation to Board on preferred facility option(s)

Amended: 9/17/24

