

### Strengths of the district

One of the strengths of our school district is the number of students who participate in extra-curricular activities including fine arts and athletics. Many of our students who participate in activities enjoy a significant amount of student success, school spirit resulting in community pride. As a district, we need to support students and ensure we have the facility and spaces to help promote further physical development and musical/fine arts performances. Unfortunately, our facility space currently does not provide for these areas and has two significant gaps in facility spaces including our ineffective weight room and sub par performing arts auditorium.

### Auditorium

Fine Arts and Performing Arts are the focal point of all educational settings. We are very fortunate in Belle Plaine to have such strong programs. The need for a new auditorium that can showcase these events is well known and a must in our community. There have been multiple proposals for different sites and the key for both of these projects is to make sure we do them well and do them right. All of the options presented are going to cost between 7 to 9 million dollars. If the auditorium is constructed as a part of a new high school the cost may be significantly reduced because of the ability to bulk order materials and machinery will already be in place for existing construction on site. This reduces the overall cost and addresses a big more significant need. When upgrading facilities it is important to do things right and ensure it is efficient.

One consideration is the intention of service to students. The auditorium would not typically be used as a teaching space and might serve far fewer students during the day than a weight and fitness room.

### Weight and Fitness Room (how many students do we have that participate in Sports?)

The weight room space has equipment in it that is broken, rusty and needs to be replaced. We followed a process to look at the weight room facility and assess the right direction moving forward. We met as a leadership team with Chad, Dave, Mindy, and Ryan. During this meeting we discussed a number of shortcomings and concerns about outdated and broken equipment as well as concerns with the physical space. The group decided to bring in a person who has built other high school weight rooms to assess and develop a plan for Belle Plaine. Once he sent us a plan we developed a couple of different options to share with the coaches and physical education staff. Chad and Dave met with the coaches and physical education department to gain their feedback on the options to ensure we gained perspective and had buy-in. The feedback indicated a strong desire to proceed with the project and an overall willingness to financially support the project (no official "pledges" were asked for at this time). The coaches and physical education staff emphasized the importance of doing the project right. As a leadership team we strongly agreed with this approach and will pursue that option.

The weight and fitness room would serve as a classroom for teaching and learning multiple times a day and support the development of all of our extra curricular activities. Ideally, ten different sports teams would access and use the space including additional summer programming expanding access and opportunities down to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade for both boys and girls. We currently have 791 participants in athletic activities with 441 students participating in duplicate sports.

Upgrading the weight room now would allow students to have a space in our current setting that is safe, high quality, and compares to surrounding schools. This space would also be able to be moved to a new school when it is constructed to ensure that the money spent now is transferable to a new site. The remodeled space will allow for future equipment expansion, with a focus on more cardiovascular equipment. This will diminish the need to reconstitute the "ISS" room. Creating one fitness area will allow for improved supervision of the space, as our treadmills are currently located across the hall. Many people have stepped forward and wanted to partner on the project and this does not require the passage of a referendum.