



September 29, 2021

Jeremy Schmidt, Superintendent  
Becker Public School District, ISD #0726-01  
12000 Hancock Street  
Becker, MN 55308-9585

Dear Superintendent Schmidt:

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 board approval is required for Becker Public School District, ISD #0726-01, to proceed with the proposed projects.

***The district shall publish a summary of the review and comment statement (the final two pages) in the legal newspaper of the district at least 20 days, but not more than 60 days, prior to holding a referendum for bonds 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 bond referendum 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 that reads 'Heather Mueller, Ed.D.'.

Heather Mueller, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

cc: Mark Swanson, School Board Chair

Enclosure

**The Commissioner of the Department of Education  
Review and Comment on the School Construction  
Proposal of Becker Public School District, ISD #0726-01**

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

Becker Public School District, ISD #0726-01, is proposing a two-question bond referendum on November 2, 2021. The first ballot question would authorize \$37.5 million in bonding authority to finance: districtwide facility additions, renovations, deferred maintenance, secure entrances/administrative addition improvements and a new transportation building. The second ballot question would authorize \$6.8 million in bonding authority to finance: artificial turf and lighting upgrades to existing athletic facilities and additional renovations for the (Early Childhood Family Education) ECFE space proposed in the first ballot question.

Proposed projects would be scheduled for completion in calendar years 2022-2024. Cost estimates by ballot question/project component are as follows:

<b>Ballot Question #1</b>			
<b>Primary School</b>		<b>Middle School</b>	
Secure Entrance / Admin Office Addition	\$451,080	Secure Entrance / Admin Office Addition	\$564,750
ECFE Addition	\$2,660,000	Renovations	\$752,000
Roof Line Modifications	\$56,000	Cafeteria Expansion	\$518,400
Drop-off Area Modifications	\$250,000	Kitchen Upgrades	\$100,000
	<b>\$3,417,080</b>	Classroom Additions	\$2,500,000
<b>Intermediate School</b>			<b>\$4,435,150</b>
Secure Entrance / Admin Office Addition	\$614,950	<b>High School</b>	
Media Center Renovations	\$320,000	Secure Entrance	\$30,000
Kitchen / Cafeteria Addition	\$350,000	CTE Renovations	\$2,341,075
Other Renovations	\$569,480	FACS Renovations	\$396,000
	<b>\$1,854,430</b>	Other Renovations	\$1,000,000
<b>Existing Transportation Building</b>			<b>\$3,767,075</b>
ECFE Renovations	\$2,012,400	<b>Districtwide Deferred Maintenance</b>	
		HVAC Upgrades	\$5,470,000
<b>New Transportation Building</b>		Roof Replacement	\$2,812,500
New Construction	\$4,000,000	Building Envelope	\$312,500
		Interior Upgrades	\$547,500
<b>Districtwide</b>			<b>\$9,142,500</b>
FF&E / Technology	\$780,000		
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$5,734,684	<b>TOTAL Project Costs - Ballot Question #1</b>	<b>\$37,500,000</b>
Contingency	\$1,766,681		
Bond Issuance	\$590,000		
	<b>\$8,871,365</b>		
<b>Ballot Question #2</b>			
<b>Stadium / Athletic Fields</b>		<b>Primary School</b>	
Artificial Turf	\$1,090,000	Additional ECFE Renovations	\$1,741,500
Field Lighting	\$600,000	Playground Area	\$140,000
	<b>\$1,690,000</b>		<b>\$1,881,500</b>
<b>Districtwide</b>		<b>Existing Transportation Building</b>	
FF&E / Technology	\$500,000	ECFE Gym Space Renovations	\$1,048,000
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$1,056,803	Maintenance Space	\$300,000
Contingency	\$321,031		<b>\$1,348,000</b>
Bond Issuance	\$100,900		
	<b>\$1,978,734</b>	<b>TOTAL Project Costs - Ballot Question #2</b>	<b>\$6,898,234</b>

Student enrollment exceeds the capacity of the existing facilities and additional enrollment growth is anticipated in the next few years. To accommodate existing and projected space needs, a six classroom addition is proposed at the middle school to accommodate additional classroom space needs. The additional ECFE space proposed will also help with congestion at the existing primary school.

The district would structure the repayment of the bond issuance so that small principal and interest payments would be made in FY 2023 and FY 2024 to minimize the initial tax impact on the Payable 2022 and 2023 levies. The amount of future bond payments would increase as other bonded debt is retired.

The district has supplied cost estimates to operate and staff the additional building space. It appears that existing revenues, along with additional revenues resulting from enrollment growth, will be sufficient to fund the operational cost increase associated with the proposed projects. The proposed projects appear to be in the long-term interest of the school district.

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.

*Heather Mueller, Ed.D.*

Heather Mueller, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

September 29, 2021