

**EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF MEETING  
OF SCHOOL BOARD  
OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 857  
LEWISTON-ALTURA, MINNESOTA**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the School Board of Independent School District No. 857, Lewiston-Altura, Minnesota was held on the 14th day of November, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present:

and the following members were absent:

Board Member \_\_\_\_\_ introduced the following Resolution and moved its adoption:

**RESOLUTION CLOSING  
LEWISTON-ALTURA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL**

WHEREAS, on September 12, 2022, the School Board heard a presentation by the School District's Facilities Task Force regarding key strategic planning recommendations, including the recommendation to close Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School; and

WHEREAS, a community public meeting was held on October 5, 2022 to further discuss the information and the recommendations; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Public Hearing on the question of the necessity and practicability of closing Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School was published in the legal newspaper of the School District, the St. Charles Press, for three successive weeks on October 13, October 20, and October 27, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the time and place of the meeting was set forth in the Notice; and

WHEREAS, Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School was identified in the Notice as a school considered for closing; and

WHEREAS, the reasons for the proposed closing were set forth in said Notice; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing on said closings was conducted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes § 123B.51, subd. 5 pursuant to said Notice by the School Board beginning at 6:30 p.m. on November 1, 2022 at the Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School, 325 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., Altura, Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, testimony and materials were received during the course of the hearing by anyone in favor of or opposed to said closings and the hearing was not deemed closed until everyone who requested to speak had an opportunity to do so; and

WHEREAS, information and materials considered by the School Board include the following: September 12, 2022 Operating Costs FAQ document; August 15, 2022 Capacity Study; August 15, 2022 Comprehensive Planning Summary; September 9, 2022 Historic, Current, & Projected Enrollment data; Winter 2022 Community Survey data; and a November 1, 2022 presentation from Superintendent Gwen Carman; and

WHEREAS, the School Board has considered public input and the recommendation of the Facilities Task Force and the School District administration to close Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that after considering the materials in the record, the testimony presented at said hearing held pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 123B.51, subd. 5, and the recommendations of the Task Force and administration, the School Board of Independent School District No. 857 (Lewiston-Altura) hereby determines that **the Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School located at 325 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. SE, Altura, Minnesota, 55910, shall be**

**closed effective at the end of the 2022-23 school year** for the following reasons and based on the following findings of fact:

1. The School District is facing significant budgetary challenges as a result of declining enrollment and aging facilities. In April 2021, the School District entered into an agreement with a consulting firm, InGensa, Inc., to lead the School District through a comprehensive planning process to identify needs and assess the educational adequacy of existing spaces, the current physical conditionals of district facilities, and the past and future student population. The School District also worked with its financial advisors, Ehlers, Inc., to analyze the District's financial operating needs, and conducted a community strategic planning survey to solicit feedback from all district stakeholders. Two community engagement meetings were held in 2022, and a Facilities Task Force was initiated to assist the School District in developing a community-supported comprehensive plan.
2. Based on the analysis conducted as part of the strategic planning process, the Facilities Task Force made recommendations to the School Board on September 12, 2022, which included the recommendation to close Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School.
3. The recommendations were significantly and substantially predicated on the School District's enrollment decline; building capacity; general fund budgetary challenges; and significant and costly maintenance and repair needs.
4. The School District's enrollment is declining:
  - a. Over the ten-year span of time from 2013-14 through 2022-23, the School District's overall K-12 enrollment declined from 729 students in 2013-14 to 618 students in 2022-23.
  - b. Over the next five years, the School District's enrollment is projected to further decline by 20%, to approximately 504 students in 2027-28.
5. The School District's general fund balance is declining:
  - a. The School District has lost significant general fund revenue as a result of declining enrollment and has projected to further experience revenue losses as a result of

declining enrollment in the future. A loss of 113 students would equate to a loss of approximately \$1,073,500 in revenue over the next five years.

- b. State and Federal funding increases have not kept pace with school districts' rising costs, which are expected to continue to rise.
  - c. The School District's unassigned fund balance has declined from \$953,948.00 in fiscal year 2019 to \$687,751.00 in fiscal year 2022.
  - d. One-time pandemic-relief funds have helped the School District break even, but most pandemic-relief funds must be spent by September 2024. These funding sources will no longer be available moving forward.
6. The School District's Capacity Study determined that the Intermediate School is significantly under-utilized, but that several of the support spaces for special education, reading, and speech are located in divided classrooms or small offices that are undersized for the number of students served in those programs. The Elementary School is also under-utilized and could accommodate an additional grade level of two sections. The High School is not under-utilized but has the capacity to accommodate an increase of 90-175 students.
7. Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School is the smallest of the District's three school building and currently hosts the District's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes. The Elementary School has the capacity to accommodate the District's 5<sup>th</sup>-grade students. The High School has the capacity to accommodate the District's 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students, which will also allow access to more elective learning opportunities for sixth-graders and enable the District to retain more full-time high school teachers.
8. Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School is the oldest of the District's three school buildings and is in need of substantial repairs and improvements at an estimated cost of \$7.5 million. Closing the building will result in an operational cost savings of at least \$175,000 per year, as well as an anticipated reduction of teaching positions estimated to save a minimum of \$50,000 per year. The Elementary School and High School also need repairs and improvements, but due to the building capacities, it would not be practicable to close either of those school buildings instead of the Intermediate School.

9. In light of the School District's current and projected enrollment, building capacities, and budgetary challenges, it is necessary and practicable to close Lewiston-Altura Intermediate School. Closing this building is necessary and practicable to put the School District in the best position to serve its students, families, and communities.
  
10. The School District has considered all data compiled through its comprehensive planning process, including community feedback through survey, at community meetings, and the public hearing. The School District considered alternatives to the closing of the school, but determined that this closure was necessary to effectively solve the identified concerns.

The motion for the adoption of the foregoing Resolution was duly seconded by Board Member \_\_\_\_\_, and upon vote being taken thereon, the following voted in favor thereof:

and the following voted against the same:

whereupon said Resolution was declared duly passed and adopted.