

SOUTH KOOCHICHING - RAINY RIVER

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #363

Dear Parents and Community Members:

I am excited and honored to have been chosen to lead the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District. I am proud of how our staff, students, parents, and the greater community have come together in recent months during these challenging and unprecedented times. Your combined efforts not only supported students' immediate needs, but also affirmed a commitment to fulfilling our District's mission, *to prepare communities of tomorrow by promoting lifelong learning, positive values, school pride, mutual respect, and individuality.*

As I transition into the role of Superintendent, I have identified two key needs for the District:

1. Improve achievement and better prepare our students for college, careers, and life after high school.
2. Finalize a plan to address our facility needs.

Our staff will be working hard to address the first priority. This survey is an important step in developing a plan to address the second priority. **An investment that is too large to be covered in our annual budget is needed to update aging infrastructure, replace major systems, and address code compliance issues.**

Ultimately, the School Board and administration are committed to finalizing a facility plan that reflects the needs of our students and the priorities of our community. This survey is a chance for all citizens to have a "voice" in the planning process.

Please take 5 to 10 minutes to answer this survey!

TAKE THE SURVEY IN ONE OF TWO EASY WAYS

Online:

- 1) Simply go to the survey website: **www.feedback2000.com**
- 2) Enter your Survey Access Number:

By Paper:

If you do not have Internet access, please return the survey to any school office or mail to:
School Perceptions, 317 East Washington St., Slinger, WI 53086.

Additional Surveys: The Survey Access Number can be used only once. To obtain additional surveys for other adults in your household, please call the District Office at (218) 897-5275 ext. 152.

Please complete the survey by October 30, 2020.

To collect this feedback, we are working with School

Perceptions LLC, an independent firm with expertise in conducting community surveys. All survey data is returned to School Perceptions to ensure respondent anonymity.

Survey results will be presented at a School Board meeting on November 11 and will also be available on the District website.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Tammi
Superintendent

Respondent Information

Please check your response to each of the following:

What is your age?

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-64
- 65 and older

Is your primary residence in the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District? Yes No

In which municipality/township is your primary residence?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridgie Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Englewood Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Pinetop Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evergreen Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Grove Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Indus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Koochiching Poll 5 (unorganized) | <input type="checkbox"/> West Koochiching (unorganized) | <input type="checkbox"/> Manitou Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Koochiching (unorganized) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sault Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Mizpah City Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Southwest Koochiching (unorganized) | <input type="checkbox"/> Murphy Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Northome Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reedy Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Silversale-Summerville Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Watrous Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildwood Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Plum Creek Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Steffe Township |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Williams Township | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Are you an employee of South Koochiching-Rainy River School District? Yes No

Do you have children attending the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District? Yes No

If you have school-aged children, what school(s) do they attend? (Select all that apply)

- Northome School
- Indus School
- Other:

Home Value Impact

The value of a person's home can be affected by the quality of the school district.

Overall, what impact do you feel the quality of the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District has on your home value?

- Positive impact
- Little to no impact
- Negative impact
- Do not own a home in the District

Communication

Keeping our citizens informed on what is happening in our schools is a priority of the school district.

How would you like to receive information regarding the school district? (Select all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School mailings | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mustang Express</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Indus Herald</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> District/school website | <input type="checkbox"/> Automated phone messages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text message | <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend informational meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend School Board meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Bear Country Chronical</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>International Falls Journal</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Television news | <input type="checkbox"/> JMC Parent Portal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |

Comments/suggestions regarding how we can improve our District communications:

Achieving Excellence

The South Koochiching-Rainy River School District has been working on a series of initiatives that were given top priority through the development of a strategic plan approved by the School Board in 2018. The plan set goals in the following areas:

- Student Support and Student Achievement
- Finance
- Facilities
- Academic Programs
- Communication and Marketing

The following statements will help us measure our progress to date.

| How well are we doing in each of the following areas? | | Please circle your response. | | | | |
|---|----------------|------------------------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------|--|
| Building pride in our community | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Delivering a high-quality educational experience | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Developing student character | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Hiring and retaining high-quality staff | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Keeping the public informed | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Ensuring school facilities meet the educational needs of students | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Partnering with the community to enhance student learning | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Preparing students for life after high school, including college and/or career | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Providing a safe and welcoming learning environment | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Spending tax dollars wisely | Great | Good | Fair | Poor | Unable to Evaluate | |
| Overall, how satisfied are you with the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District? | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Not satisfied | Very unsatisfied | No opinion | |

What do you like best about the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District?

What areas would you like improved in the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District?

Facility Projects

With the help of staff, student, parents and ARI Architects, the District has identified potential facility projects that could be funded through a referendum. The feedback gathered through this survey will help the School Board develop a plan for how to proceed.

Base Plan

The District acknowledges that it may not be realistic to complete all of the needed updates at one time. Therefore, they have identified an \$8 million **Base Plan** that includes the schools' most pressing needs.

| Project | Cost |
|---|-------------|
| Roof replacement at Northome School and Indus School | \$1,250,000 |
| Boiler indoor air quality upgrades at Northome School and Indus School | \$4,020,000 |
| Plumbing updates | \$1,100,000 |
| ➤ Water piping and fixture replacements at Northome School and Indus School | |
| ➤ Bathroom updates at Northome School and Indus School | |
| ➤ Locker room flooring replacement at Indus School | |
| ➤ Locker room renovations at Northome School | |
| Technology infrastructure updates | \$ 105,200 |
| ➤ Telephone and intercom wiring/system installation | |
| ➤ Installation of security cameras and electronic door monitoring systems | |
| ➤ Internet wiring/switches | |
| Resurface/replace driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks at Northome School and Indus School | \$ 480,000 |
| Update finishes (flooring, ceilings, lighting, door hardware) at Northome School and Indus School | \$1,044,800 |

Estimated cost: \$8 million

How likely would you be to support a referendum that provides funding to complete the Base Plan as described above?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not likely
- Undecided

Comments/suggestions:

Additional Projects

In addition to the Base Plan, the following projects could also be included in a referendum:

| What priority would you place on each of the following if they were included in a referendum? <i>Please check your response in the appropriate box.</i> | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Replace Playgrounds at Both Schools The school playgrounds are more than 40 years old and do not meet current safety and accessibility standards. Updated playgrounds would benefit both the school and community. <i>Est. Cost: \$255,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| Replace Indoor Bleachers The gym bleachers in both schools are in need of replacement. New bleachers would better meet current safety and accessibility standards. <i>Est. Cost: \$750,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| Build an Indoor Rodeo Arena An indoor rodeo arena could be built in Northome, allowing students and the community a place to train and compete. <i>Est. Cost: \$280,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| Build a Fitness Center for School and Community Use The indoor rodeo arena could be designed to include a fitness center that would provide weight and cardio training space for physical education classes, athletic teams, and community use. <i>Est. Cost: \$390,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| Update Indus Hockey Arena The hockey arena is more than 20 years old and in need of updates to system components (heating/cooling, electrical, plumbing) as well as flooring, lighting, and finishes. <i>Est. Cost: \$300,000</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure |
| Estimated cost: up to \$1.975 million | | | | |
| How likely would you be to support a referendum that provides funding to complete the additional projects listed above? | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Very likely <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat likely <input type="checkbox"/> Not likely <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided | |

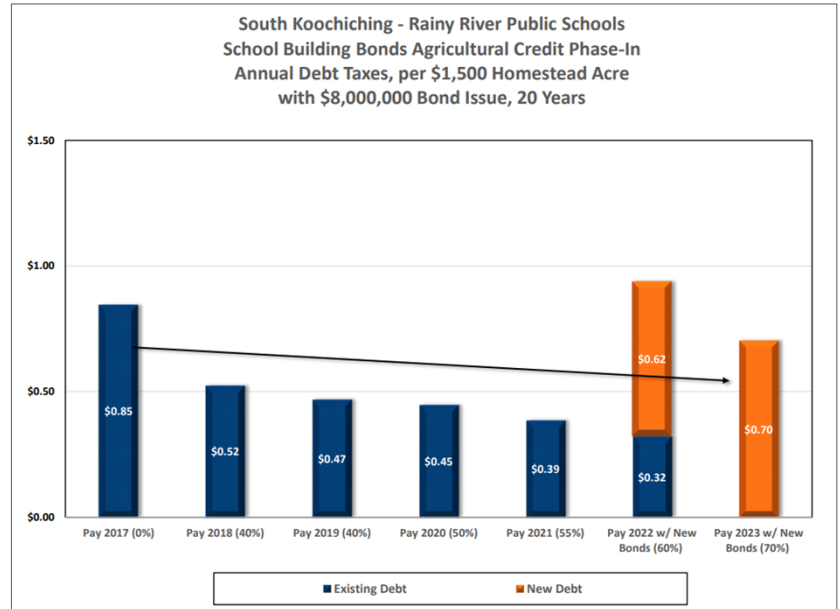
Comments/suggestions:

Financial Planning Background

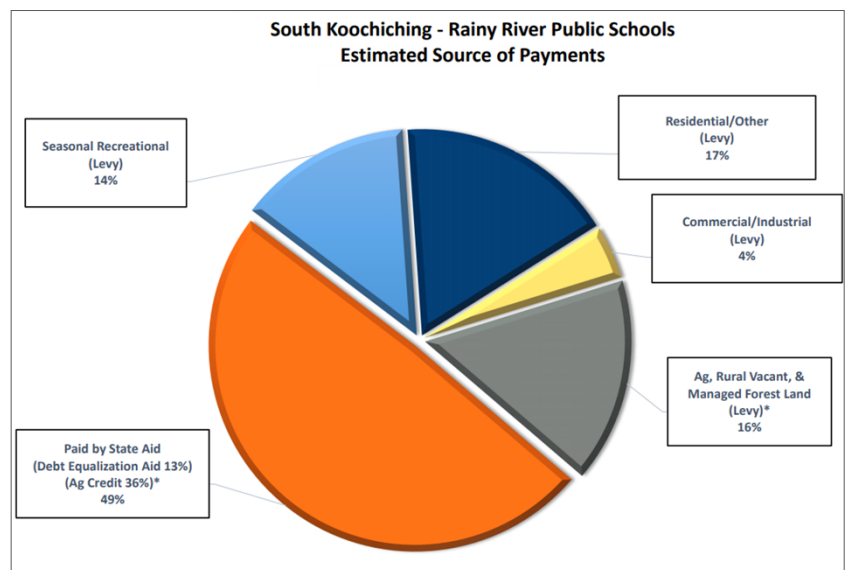
The District believes this is a good time to consider a major facility project because:

- ✓ Interest rates remain near historic lows.
- ✓ These projects would qualify for the School Building Bond Agricultural Credit. This credit, approved in 2017 and enhanced in 2019, reduced property taxes paid on agricultural land for school improvements by 40% initially, and then by to 50% in 2020, 55% in 2021, 60% in 2022, and 70% for taxes payable in 2023 and beyond. As a result, the tax impact of the District's existing debt on agricultural properties has declined since 2017, and the tax impact for a potential new bond issue would gradually decrease from 2022 to 2023 and beyond.

For example, as shown in the graph to the right, prior to the passage of the credit, school bond taxes on a \$1,500 acre were \$0.85 annually. Over time, that tax rate has declined as the credit phased in, and even with an \$8 million bond, taxes paid are estimated to be lower than they were in 2017.



- ✓ The District is largely made up of state owned land. So unlike many other districts, South Koochiching is estimated to receive about 13% of the payments (for an \$8m bond) through *state debt equalization aid*. The District will also receive 36% of the payments through the Ag Credit. **In total, both programs will account for approximately 49% of the bond payments.** This means local taxpayers would only be responsible for 51% of the project.



Facility Bond Support

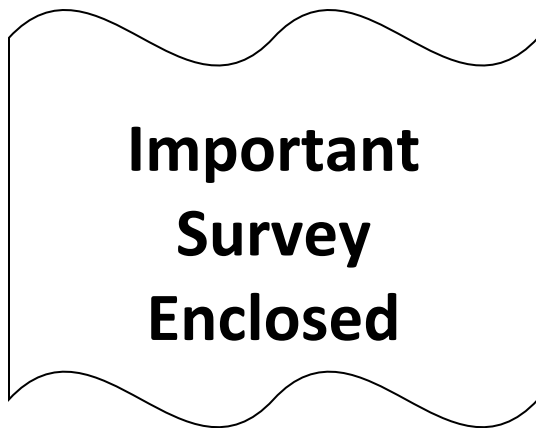
The following table shows the annual tax impact for various referendum amounts. The District would like to know your level of support, should they consider a bond referendum.

| PROPERTY TAX IMPACT | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|-------------|-----------------|
| Type of Property | Estimated Market Value | Bond Referendum Estimated Impact Per Year | | |
| | | \$6 million | \$8 million | \$9.975 million |
| Residential Homestead | \$60,000 | \$57 | \$74 | \$87 |
| | \$80,000 | \$79 | \$103 | \$120 |
| | \$90,000 | \$96 | \$125 | \$146 |
| | \$100,000 | \$113 | \$147 | \$173 |
| | \$150,000 | \$199 | \$259 | \$304 |
| | \$200,000 | \$284 | \$371 | \$435 |
| Commercial/Industrial | \$100,000 | \$236 | \$308 | \$361 |
| | \$250,000 | \$669 | \$873 | \$1,023 |
| Ag Homestead** (average value per acre of land and buildings) | \$1,000 | \$0.31 | \$0.41 | \$0.48 |
| | \$1,500 | \$0.47 | \$0.62 | \$0.72 |
| | \$2,000 | \$0.63 | \$0.82 | \$0.96 |
| Ag Non-Homestead* (average value per acre of land and buildings) | \$1,000 | \$0.63 | \$0.82 | \$0.96 |
| | \$1,500 | \$0.94 | \$1.23 | \$1.44 |
| | \$2,000 | \$1.26 | \$1.64 | \$1.93 |
| <p><i>*Ag2School Property Tax Relief Bill: Estimated tax impacts represent a 60% reduction due to the School Building Bond Agricultural Credit. The Ag2School Property Tax Relief Bill that was passed in May 2019 will further reduce property taxes paid on agricultural land for school improvements by 70% for taxes payable in 2023 and beyond.</i></p> <p>Read more at: https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/comm/docs/ff0ef859-f36d-49a0-bd42-dcf861e1553c.pdf.</p> <p><i>**Homestead examples exclude the house, garage, and one acre, which has the same tax impact as a residential homestead.</i></p> | | | | |
| <p>How much of a tax impact would you support through a bond referendum, assuming the projects included were acceptable to you?</p> <p><i>Assumes a 20-year borrowing term with a True Interest Cost of 3.50%.</i></p> | | <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would support a \$9.975 million bond referendum</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would support a \$8 million bond referendum</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would support a \$6 million bond referendum</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would only support a smaller bond referendum</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would not support any bond referendum</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure/need more information</p> | | |

Comments/suggestions:

Thank you for your participation. We sincerely value your time and input.

South Koochiching-Rainy River School District
ISD #363
Box 465, Hwy 1
Northome, MN 56661



Please complete the survey by mail or online by [October 30, 2020](#).

This publication was produced for the residents of the South Koochiching-Rainy River School District. Due to the overlap of postal routes, residents from neighboring school districts may receive this publication. Given the limitations of bulk mailing, this overlap was difficult to eliminate without significant cost. Thank you for your understanding.