



## Hiawatha Valley Education District (HVED) Board of Directors' Statement of Support

for purchase of the Winona Mall, 1213 Gilmore Avenue, Winona MN

This is a member-driven initiative to meet the legal and ethical obligations of providing effective and efficient educational space and service to all students in our care.

### Due Diligence to the Process:

- HVED has conducted a study of several properties in and around nearly every community within HVED and the city of Winona over the last ten (10) years with greater emphasis over the last five (5) years.
- A facility study was conducted by Kraus-Anderson in 2018 resulting in three recommendations:
  - Build two separate sites: one in the north and one in the south
  - Build one common site: Winona is the agreed upon best location
  - Continue managing several small sites around SE Minnesota (HVED currently hosts five sites)
    - **SAIL Program and PAES Lab in Kellogg, MN** – 51 Red School Lane (owned)
    - **SPECTRUM Program in Hokah, MN** – 200 Main Street (four classrooms and related spaces leased annually from the City of Hokah - \$30,925 for 2023-2024)
    - **River Valley Academy Area Learning Center in Winona, MN** – 1250 Homer Road (two classrooms within Minnesota State College SE – leased annually for \$20,549 for 2023-2024)
    - **PAES Lab in Caledonia, MN** – Caledonia Area Public Schools (one classroom within MS/HS leased annually for \$8,571.42 for 2023-2024)
    - **District Office in Winona, MN** – 1410 Bundy Blvd (owned)
      - Travel distance/time between the District Office to:
        - SAIL and PAES Lab in Kellogg: 30 miles/32 minutes
        - SPECTRUM in Hokah: 30 miles/30 minutes
        - PAES Lab Caledonia: 35 miles/43 minutes
        - RVA – ALC in Winona: 1 mile/3 minutes
- **CURRENT CONDITIONS have increased demand for programming**
  - SAIL has grown from 2 teachers and 8 students in 2016 to 5 teachers and 30 students in 2023
  - SPECTRUM did not exist in 2015 and has grown to 4 teachers and 16 students in 2023
- **PLUS current conditions have decreased ability to secure staffing**
  - For example, HVED initiated the ACHIEVE Program (behavior program in the south) in August, 2020 and closed in November, 2021 primarily due to the inability to secure staffing.
- **EQUALS the need to focus on a central site as the most effective and efficient programming option**
  - **Per State and Federal Statute, all public school districts are obligated to provide services and supports for students with special needs from birth through age 21 within a continuum of services.** HVED member districts provide those services (Federal Setting I, II, and III) within your own districts with the support of HVED staff coming to your schools. If the IEP Team determines that the student's needs are best met in a Federal Setting IV program, the student will attend school in SAIL with a class size of eight (8) students per teacher/para or SPECTRUM with a class

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size of six (6) students per teacher/para. No one district in the whole of southeast Minnesota has the capacity to serve just their own students—therefore being part of an Education District, like HVED, is the most effective and efficient manner available to provide highly specialized programming for your students. **With HVED, your district receives 100% of the benefit for a fraction of the cost.**

- Safe, secure, and appropriate facilities for highly specialized programming through age 21
  - Retro-fitting former elementary schools vacated by our member districts have provided space for HVED’s programs when they were small and staffing was not scarce. As programs have grown, these spaces have become inadequate and as staffing resources have become even more scarce, it has become increasingly difficult to operate a program in a smaller community.
  - These spaces have come at a significant cost, beyond the lease price. Required renovations and repairs have been costly. Of note, this June the seclusion room at our SAIL site did not pass the State Fire Marshall’s inspection. We will need to install a sprinkler system before we can use it. Quotes for that and other repairs are being received.
- Adequate staffing and additional supports for flexible needs within all programs
  - HVED completed an organizational study in April, 2023. The results are available at: <https://www.hved6013.org/page/4043> Virtually every concept revealed within this report could be resolved by HVED operating its programs on a common campus.
- **Value added to HVED and member districts**
  - This particular property offers the needed programming space (and potential for growth) in a central location: 1213 Gilmore Avenue, Winona, MN provides 83,000 sq ft with a maximum cost of \$19.5M (includes the property purchase price) in 2023 shared between 12 member districts.
  - Comparisons to our neighboring special education collaborative services:
    - **Goodhue County Education District (GCED)** - built next to Red Wing High School has 65,000 sq ft for \$15M opened in the fall of 2015 shared between six member districts.
    - **Southern Minnesota Education Consortium (SMEC)** - built on the Rose Creek Exit along I-90 outside of Austin, MN has 12,000 sq ft for \$4.1M opened in the fall of 2020 shared between seven member districts.
    - **Zumbro Education District (ZED)** - built next to Kasson-Mantorville Schools in Kasson has 61,000 sq ft for \$16M opened in the fall of 2022 shared between six member districts.
    - **Southern Plains Education Cooperative (Southern Plains)** – renovated a school in Fairmont, MN has 43,000 sq ft for \$10.8M opened in the fall of 2019 shared between five member districts.
  - The costs for purchasing the Winona Mall and renovating it from a commercial/retail space to an educational space is estimated at \$200-\$250/square foot as opposed to building a new space estimated at \$400-\$450/square foot.

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- HVED Superintendents collectively agreed upon the financing formula to be used within this Joint Powers Agreement to be as fair as possible to the various sizes of districts within HVED.
- Cost savings for member district transportation to one site rather than five sites will be significant.
- This purchase eliminates the need to lease property with the City of Hokah and with Minnesota State College SE but retains the option of leasing space for the PAES Lab in Caledonia.
- This purchase agreement allows HVED to retain the owned property in Kellogg and the District Office in Winona for future use or sale.
- Although operational costs can only be estimated, reducing essential services like food service, garbage, cleaning, etc. from five sites to just one site will save costs in staff time and effort.
- Opportunities for member district employees for HVED positions could be expanded. For example, hiring a staff member as an HVED driver/para for students coming from our member districts to HVED programs. A fulltime member district resident can drive the students to and from our program each day and receive driver wages for the transport time, work as a paraprofessional or maintenance or custodial, etc. during the school day. This full-time position comes with full-time benefits for programming during the school year and in the summertime.
- Opportunities for partnerships with community resources within 10 minutes from the proposed site for HVED:
  - Winona State University (7 minutes)
  - St. Mary's University (4 minutes)
  - Minnesota State College SE (7 minutes)
  - Bluffview Montessori Charter School (2 minutes)
  - Cotter Schools (11 minutes)
  - Winona Senior High School (6 minutes)
  - Hiawatha Valley Mental Health, Winona Health, Gundersen Clinic (all within 10 minutes of the proposed new HVED campus at 1213 Gilmore Ave.)
  - Business and community organizations

**The HVED Board of Directors supports *HVED Joint Powers Agreement Education Facility in Winona, MN***

- **Respecting our responsibility to exercise financial prudence with tax-payer dollars.**
- **Recognizing the significant value this collaborative effort establishes for the students needing specialized programming beyond our individual districts' capacity to provide it.**
- **Responding to the educational, economic, and environmental conditions occurring in and around our communities throughout southeast Minnesota.**
- **Reinforcing our educational partnership and commitment to serving all students from birth through age 21 residing within our communities.**

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Our support is evidenced by our signatures  
as a School Board Representative for our Independent School District  
and  
a Member of the HVED Board of Directors  
July 26, 2023

*Spencer Yohe*

Caledonia – Spencer Yohe, Director

*Tom Keefe*

Chatfield – Tom Keefe, Director

*Ron Pagel*

Dover-Eyota – Ron Pagel, Board Chair

*Eric Morken*

La Crescent-Hokah – Eric Morken, Director

*Christine Troendle*

Lanesboro – Christine Troendle, Board Clerk

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Lewiston-Altura – Jenny Koverman, Director

*Diane Wilder*

Mabel-Canton – Diane Wilder, Director

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*Amy Woxland*

Rushford-Peterson – Amy Woxland, Ed.D., Director

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Wabasha-Kellogg – Phil Rosendale, Director

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