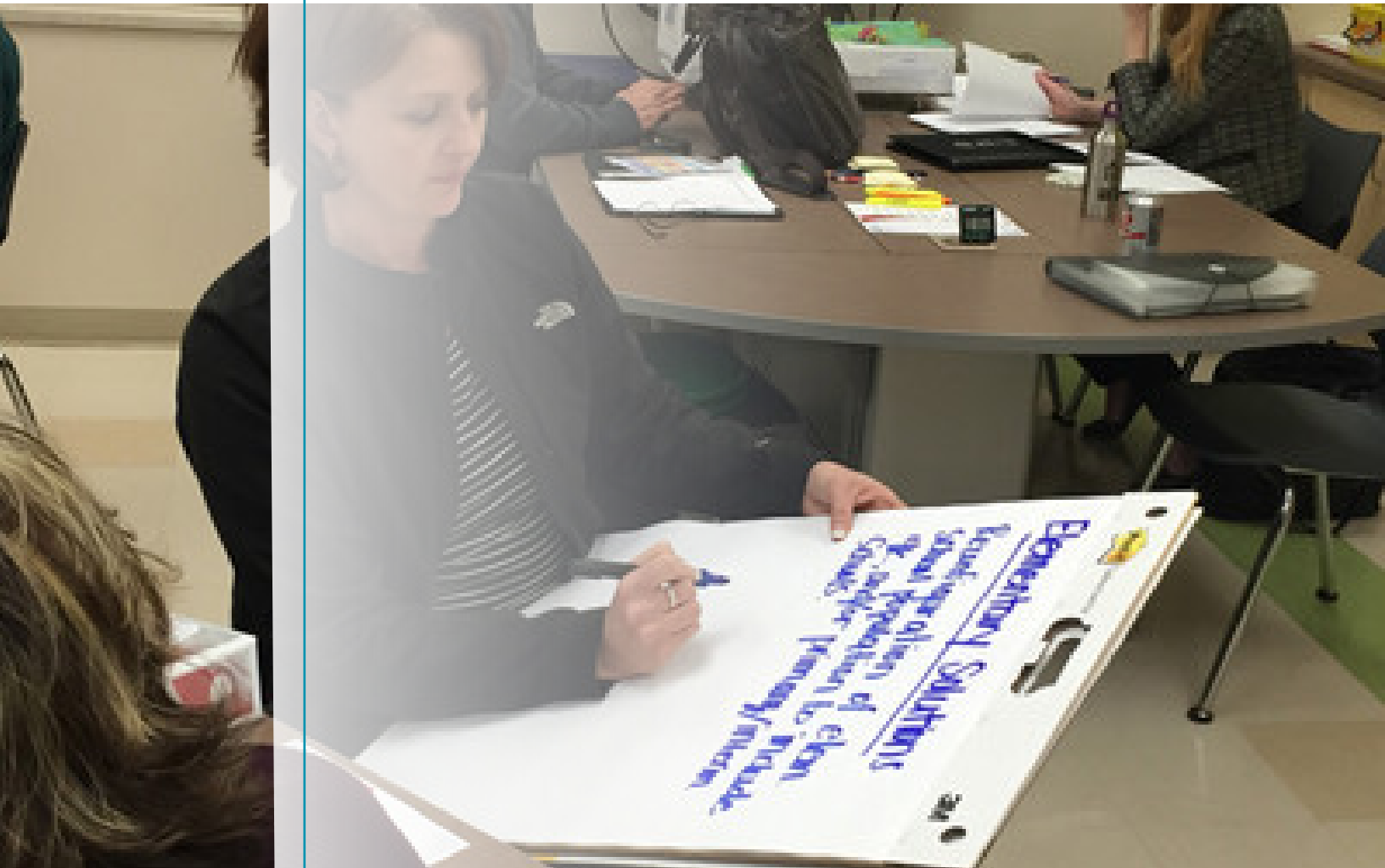


EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR A CHANGING TOMORROW

Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District Final Report of the Facility Planning Committee



Contact

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To: School Board and Administration
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District

From: ATSR Principal and Architectural Designer, Dean Beeninga
ATSR Senior Educational Planner, Tom Tapper

Re: Final Report of the Facility Planning Committee

Date: December 15, 2015

Board Members and Administration,

We want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to assist you in bringing representatives of the community together to examine the conditions of your school facilities and to make a recommendation to you in how the District might proceed in the very difficult and complex challenges of bringing your school facilities up to standards, both in terms of facility repair and betterment needs as well as in meeting the changing learning environments of 21st century education.

As you know, the Facilities Planning Committee (FPC) was formed out of a board action in August of 2015 that approved the comprehensive Long Range Master Facility Plan 2015-2030 prepared by ATSR and directed the superintendent to bring together a Facility Planning Committee to examine the Plan and prepare a recommendation for Board consideration on how the District might best be able to move forward.

Beginning in October, the FPC came together in a series of five (5) meetings over a period of ten (10) weeks. Minutes from those meetings have been posted on the District's website and were provided to each of you immediately following each meeting. In its final meeting, the Committee met its objective by developing a recommendation for Board approval. The recommendation is as follows:

The Facility Planning Committee Recommends that the Board give consideration to the:

".... i) construction of a new senior high school, ii) reconfiguration of the current high school to accommodate a middle school program, iii) conversion of the middle school into an intermediate school for grades 4 and 5 with the relocation of District services into this facility, iv) upgrading of elementary schools to address immediate and long-term facility needs that ensures their longevity for thirty years and beyond and v) closing and/or repurposing of two (2) elementary schools to maintain District's operating efficiency..."

Further, the Facility Planning Committee, recognizing the challenges facing the Board in gaining community support for a complex and potentially expensive initiative, developed a set of steps

for the Board to consider that will support a successful referendum levy effort. Below is the set of suggestions.

The Board should be prepared to:

- Participate in a thorough review of all that has been done
- Give support to the Committee's recommendation
- Communicate the entire process and plan to the public using a variety of means:
 - ✓ Listening sessions so the community can learn what is being proposed and get additional feedback from the community
 - ✓ Make presentations to community service groups
 - ✓ Invite the community into schools to observe during the school day
 - ✓ Create videos of the current situation in our schools and on the school grounds (safety issues)
 - ✓ Create and disseminate information brochures
- Develop an understanding within the community of:
 - ✓ How children learn today (21st Century Education)
 - ✓ The financial impact of delaying (pay it now or pay more later)
 - ✓ Tax impact of the community
 - ✓ The benefits for the entire community (including those households with no children)
- Give consideration to:
 - ✓ Staggering the debt issuance
 - ✓ Providing the community with a multi-question ballot
 - ✓ Consider multiple referendums staggered over time

Contained within this report are the 'highlights' of the Facility Planning Committee's meetings that led to their recommendation. Again, thank you for this opportunity to serve your District and school community. We are prepared to provide you continuing assistance as desired.

Most Respectfully,

Dean Beeninga
Principal, ATSR

Tom Tapper
ATSR Senior Planner

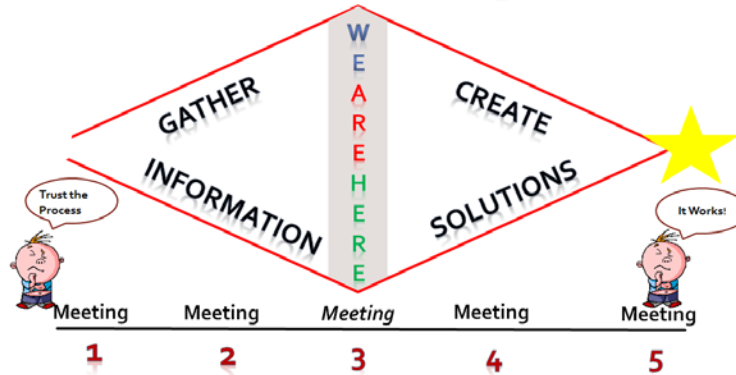
Members of the Facility Planning Committee were provided with a copy of the “Long-Range Facility Master Plan 2015-2013” prepared for the CFAUSD by ATSR. At its first meeting, school designer Dean Beeninga reviewed in detail both the educational and facility inadequacies (repair and betterment needs) of each building cited in the report. In its second meeting, FPC members, identified what it believed to be the most pressing needs of School District’s facilities. Those needs identified are listed below.

- 1) Lack of 21st Century learning spaces that support our use of technology, differentiated instruction and special needs (5 out of 5 groups had identified this as an area of concern)
- 2) We have crowded buildings with no room for expansion (5 out of 5)
- 3) We need air quality/HVAC system upgrades (4 out of 5)
- 4) General repair and maintenance needs have to be addressed (4 out of 5)
- 5) Inadequate safety at our elementary schools related to student drop-off/loading zones (3 out of 5)
- 6) The lack of natural light in the junior high school (2 out of 5)
- 7) We lack the necessary funding to adequately address the facility upgrades that are needed (2 out of 5)
- 8) We must expand our building space to provide greater ‘utility’ for our community (1 out of 5)
- 9) We should tear down outdated facilities and repurpose the site(s) for alternative uses (1 out of 5)

It is important to note that the planning process used by the facilitators throughout the entire series of meetings provided Committee members with the opportunity to formulate their own thoughts, share those thoughts in small group discussions, and finally have the thoughts of the small group, (which represented a consensus) presented to the entire Committee for consideration and discussion.

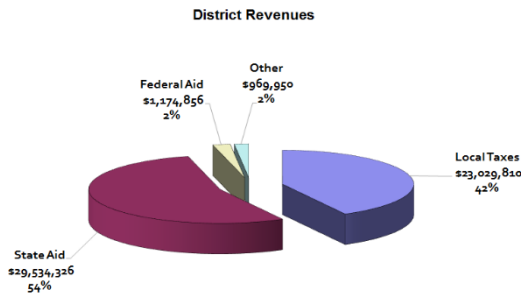
The entire planning process was designed to provide needed information to the FPC and to provide time for reflection and analysis, before narrowing the information into a workable solution. The process utilized is illustrated below.

CFAUSD/ATSR Planning Process

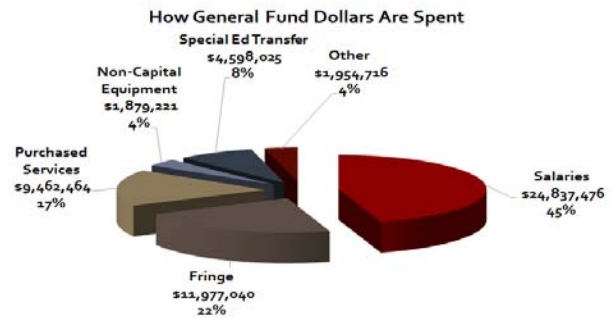


In addition to the information and data supplied to the Committee through the Master Facility Plan, the Committee was also provided important information related to school finance and 21st Century educational design. Below are two (2) examples of financial information provided.

Sources of Revenue



Resources Are Spent

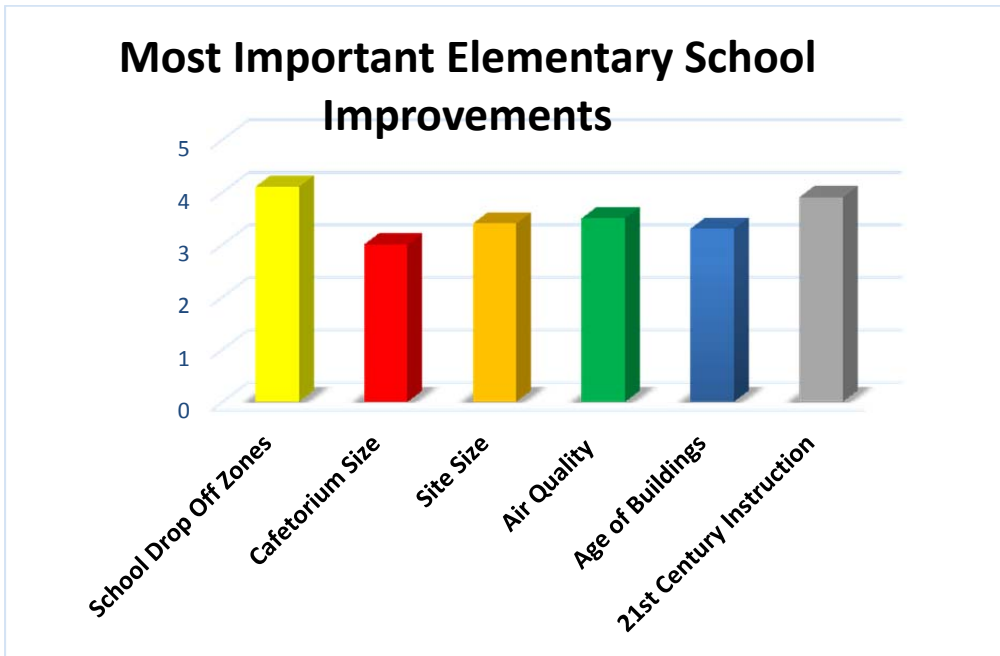


The graph above identifies the sources of District revenue as well as how those limited resources are allocated. Below is an outline of the history of the District's levy rate; both the immediate past and projections into the future.

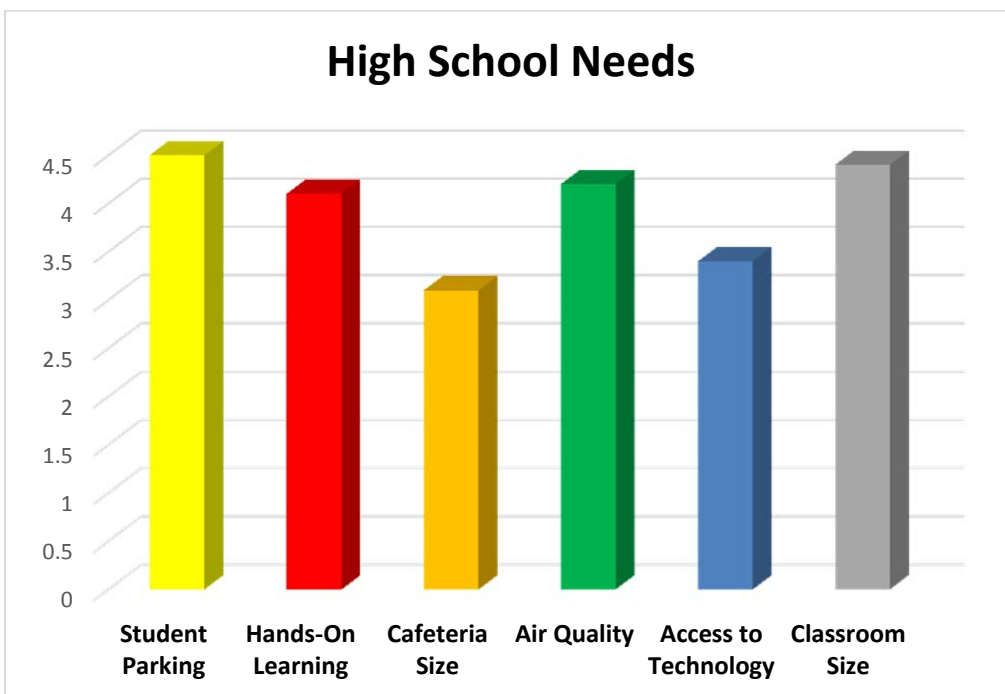


The District’s Business Manager Chad Trowbridge presented this data along with other pertinent and important information; helping Committee members understand the financial position of the District. This information, along with other financial data, was viewed to be important; creating a better understanding of how the District allocates its limited resources for both operational and capital (facility maintenance and repair) expenditures.

Between its second and third meeting, Committee members were provided an opportunity to respond to the first of two (2) surveys. The purpose of the survey was to begin to develop a clearer idea of the many thoughts and ideas FPC members had related not only to the conditions of the existing facilities, but also to the changes that are taking place in the teaching/learning process. Twenty-two (22) Committee members responded to this survey. The findings of the survey laid, in part, the foundation for the final recommendation of the Facilities Planning Committee to the Board. For example, the graph below shows what respondents believed are the greatest needs of the current elementary school facilities.

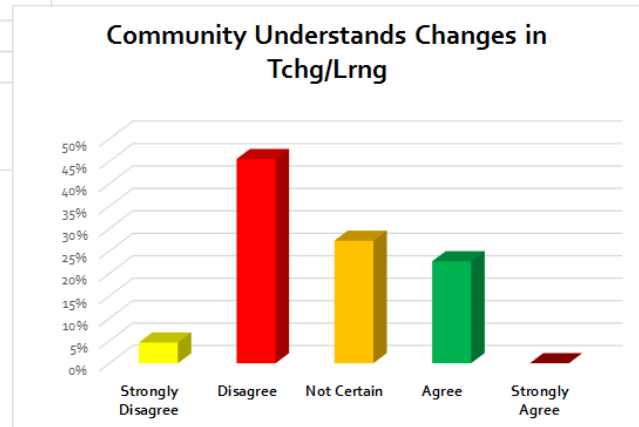
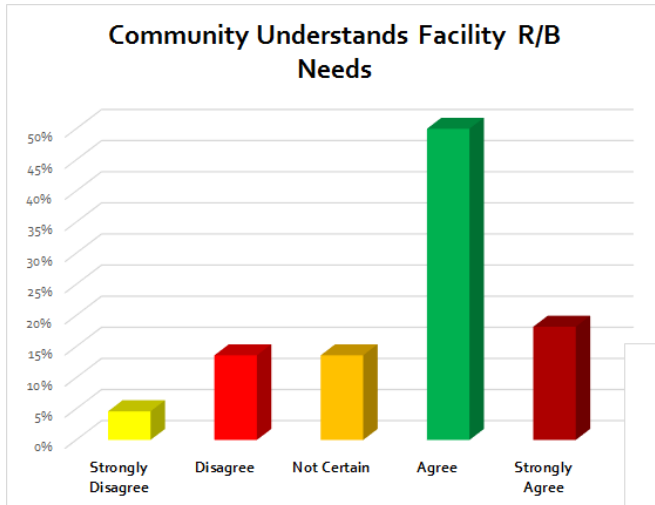


Similarly, the survey asked Committee members what they believed were the greatest needs of the senior high school. Results appeared to indicate that the Committee believed the most critical high school needs included larger classrooms for instruction, the need for instructional spaces that supported hands-on learning activities and expansion of the congested/unsafe parking areas.

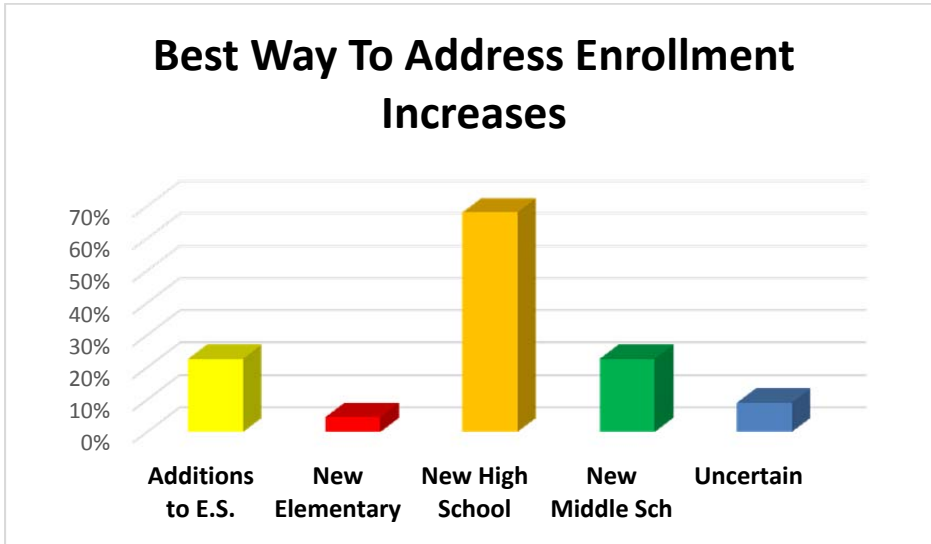


In a separate question, the inadequacy of the size of the gymnasium at the high school was also noted by an overwhelming number of respondents.

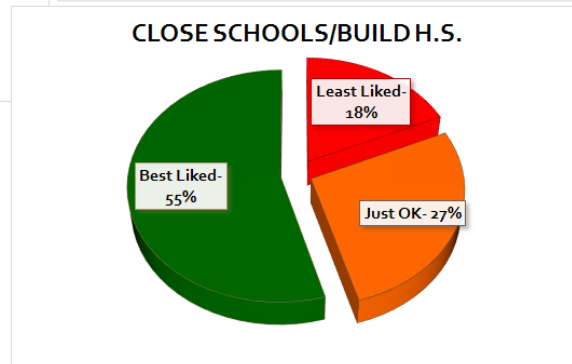
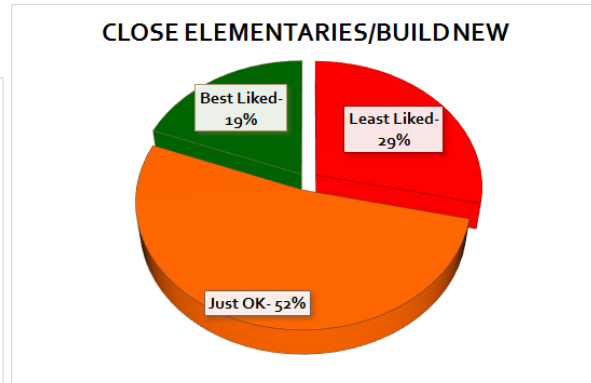
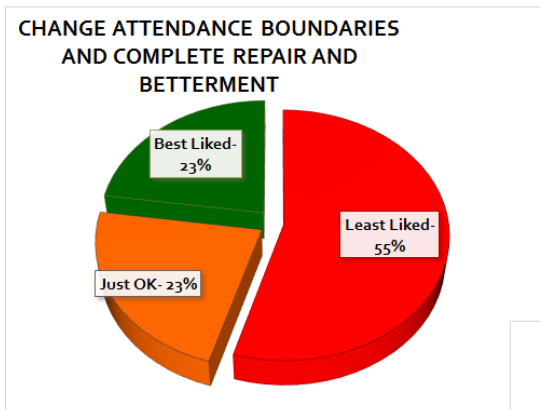
This first survey also laid the foundation for the Committee to examine the extent to which the community understood the changing nature of the teaching/learning process as well as the current condition of the school facilities. Their feelings related to these two (2) issues are shown in the graphs below.



The Master Facilities Plan provided the Committee with information related to enrollment projections. The information within the plan noted that adequate instructional space is already a concern at the elementary level. Projected enrollments over the next five (5) years appear to extend crowded conditions across the District schools. Committee members were asked to identify the best way to address enrollment increases. The graph below shows their responses.



The “Long Range Facilities Master Plan” contained several scenarios that created possible new directions for the Board to consider. The Facilities Planning Committee was asked to review each and offer their thoughts related to which option was the most preferred. The graphs below show the results.



As noted earlier, the responses to this survey, and subsequent Committee discussions, helped to lay the framework for the FPC's final recommendation to the Board.

In the fourth meeting, based upon the feedback from previous meetings, Committee members had the opportunity to review and discuss nine (9) possible options that address the challenges of upgrading school facilities; pathways leading to meeting the Board's objective of ensuring District facilities operate efficiently and support learning. Through discussion, those nine (9) options were reduced to the six (6) that are summarized below. (Note: Option numbers relate to their 'position' within the original nine (9)).

Option 1: Repair, replace and improve all buildings and construct additions to address enrollment growth as needed. Estimated cost: **\$140,312,516**

Option 2: Construct a new elementary school. Close Hillcrest and Stillson. Repair, replace and improve existing schools as needed. Construct additions if needed to address enrollment increases. Estimated cost: **\$140,224,164**

Option 3: Construct a new high school. Close Hillcrest and Stillson. Convert the high school into a middle school. Convert the middle school into an elementary school. Repair, replace and improve remaining elementary schools as needed. Construct additions if needed to address enrollment increases. Estimated cost: **\$165,213,082**

Option 4: Construct a new middle school. Close Stillson and Hillcrest. Convert the middle school into an elementary school. Construct an addition onto the high school. Repair, replace and improve remaining elementary schools. Construct additions as needed to accommodate enrollment increases. Estimated cost: **\$171,407,702**

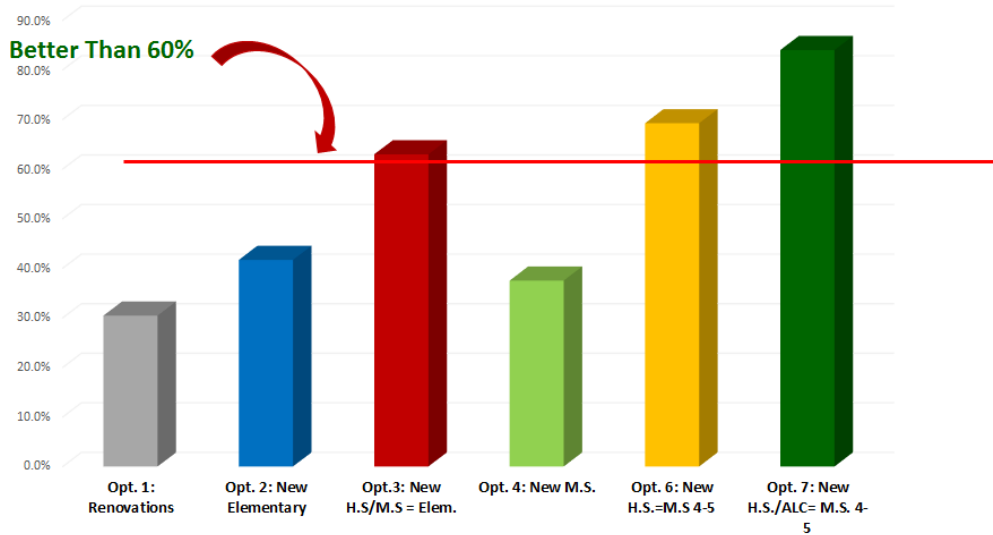
Option 6: Construct a new senior high school. Close Stillson and Hillcrest. Convert the high school into a 6-8 middle school and the middle school into a 4-5 intermediate school. In this option, the District Office and pupil support services relocated into the middle school. Repair, replace and improve the remaining elementary schools. Estimated cost: **\$165,213,082**

Option 7: Construct a new high school that incorporates the ALC. Close Hillcrest and Stillson. Convert the current high school into a 6-8 middle school and the middle school into a 4-5 intermediate school. Repair, replace and improve the remaining elementary schools. In this option, the District Office and pupil support services relocated into the middle school. Estimated cost: **\$167,213,082**

After the Committee evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of each option, a second survey was given to FPC members between their fourth and fifth meeting. The purpose of this survey was to narrow the thoughts and ideas of Committee members toward the development of a

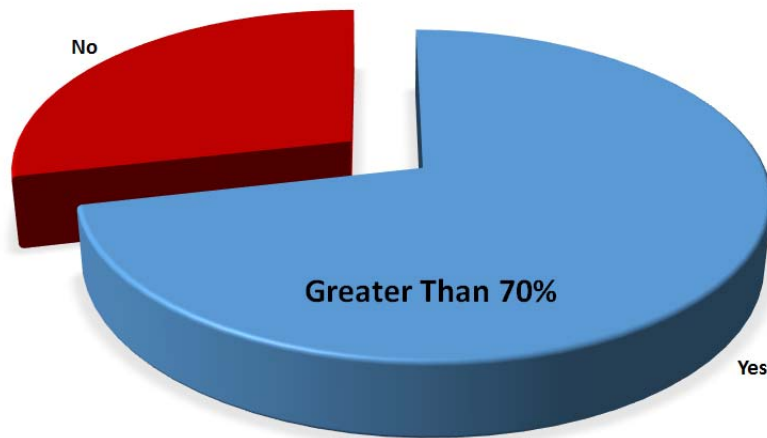
single recommendation for the Board to consider. Responses to the survey, as shown below, indicated a strong preference for constructing a new senior high school. Of the six (6) options, three incorporated the construction of a new high school into the solution. Those three (3) options were viewed by survey respondents (N = 28) to be the preferred options to consider.

Q1: MOST PREFERRED (TOP 3)



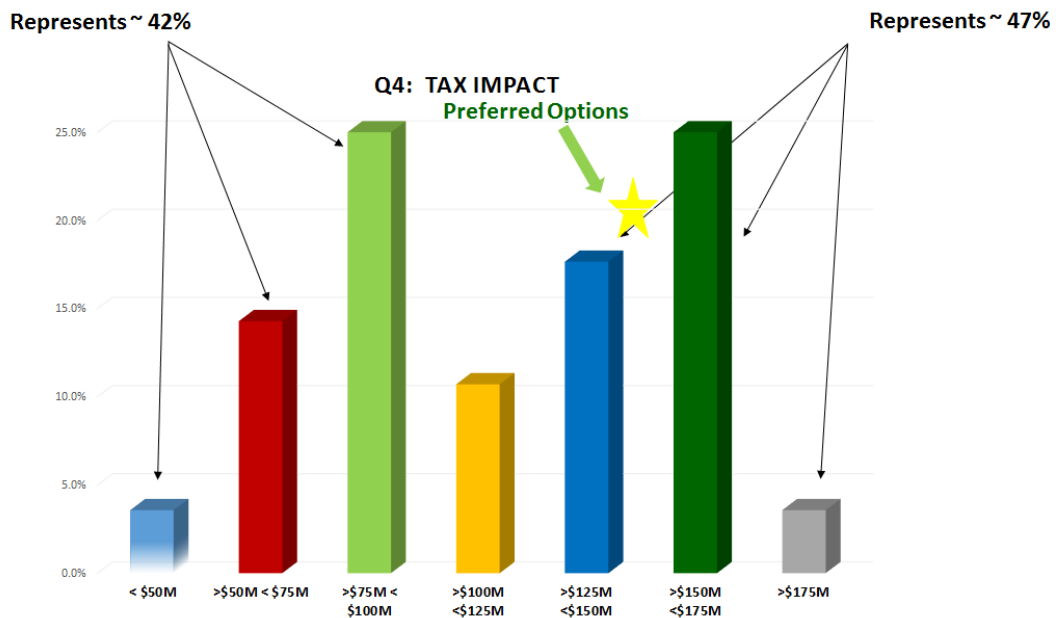
Committee members were also asked about the importance of providing a new competition pool.

Q3: NEW POOL



Respondents overwhelmingly supported this initiative.

The Committee was also asked to provide their ‘sense’ of what the community might support in terms of a tax impact. The graph below suggests that a majority of those responding believed the community would support a referendum levy in excess of \$125,000 **IF** the community was involved and informed in the referendum process. It was deemed highly important (note the recommended action steps for the Board in the submittal letter) that every effort be made- using multiple approaches- for the community to listen, learn and be given an opportunity to understand the District’s needs.



The graph also shows that there is an almost equivalent amount of Committee members who responded with the suggestion that the referendum amount remain below \$100,000. The cost of the three (3) final options, however, all fell within the range of \$150,000 to \$175,000.

As a final exercise prior to developing a recommendation for the Board to consider, Committee members were asked to identify those factors which might ‘compel’ the Board and school community to support the FPC recommendation. Collective ideas included:

Positive Factors Supporting Moving Forward

- Alleviates Overcrowding
- Improves Learning Spaces
- New High School Benefits Everyone
- Increases Safety
- Pay Forward for Future Generation
- Creates Opportunities for Expanded Community Use

- Keep the Middle School on West Hill
- Construction Costs Aren't Getting Cheaper
- We Only Ask When We Need It
- This is a Long Term Solution
- These Facilities Match the Capabilities of our Great Teachers
- We will Better Be Able to Keep our Students Attending CFAUSD
- We will Have Spaces to Do Programs We Want to Do
- We Create a 21st Century Learning Environment in the High School
- Alleviate Parking and Congested Spaces
- This Represents the Best Option Now and Into the Future
- This Plan Affects the Most Students
- We Provide for Excess Capacity
- Reduces Driving/Parking Congestion
- District is Currently Debt Free
- Our Need is Facilities Not Operations
- Interest Rates are Low at This Time
- 'Support Growth' is a Pillar in our Strategic Plan
- We are Growing Our Schools in all Directions
- Everyone Gets Something
- We have Momentum in the Community
- The ALC is a Part of the Senior High School
- Creating an Intermediate School is the Most Efficient Use of Facilities
- We've Improved the Educational Environment
- By eliminating Stillson and Hillcrest We've Eliminated Two of our Worst Safety Concerns

Committee members were also asked to identify those factors which might 'compel' the Board and community to decide against the FPC recommendation. Collective ideas included:

Possible Factors Potentially Inhibiting Moving Forward

- The Plan Will Require Redistricting
- Not all Elementary Students would Have Access to the Pool
- Schools will Be Closed
- Tax Impact
- There is a Need to Convince Homes Without Children of the Benefits
- There is One Additional Transition For Students

After giving consideration to all information provided and the discussions between and among Committee members, the Facilities Planning Committee determined the pathway forward for the Board would be to present to the CFAUSD community a levy referendum question for the: *"... i) construction of a new senior high school, ii) reconfiguration of the current high school to accommodate a middle school program, iii) conversion of the middle school into an intermediate school for grades 4 and 5 with the relocation of District services into this facility, iv) upgrading of elementary schools to address immediate and long-term facility needs that*

ensures their longevity for thirty years and beyond and v) closing and/or repurposing of two (2) elementary schools to maintain District's operating efficiency..."

At the final meeting of the Facilities Planning Committee, in closing comments, the Superintendent spoke with Committee about how the process might move forward. Two (2) timelines were discussed. The first was to move forward with an objective of asking the Board to approve in late January, the presentation of a referendum levy to the CFAUSD community in April. The second timeline would be to hold off an election until the November general election. There was considerable discussion related to the 'pros' and 'cons' to each timeline. Of particular concern with the April timeline was the ability for the Board to take all necessary steps in a timely manner and the ability to engage in an effective communication and outreach plan with the entire school community. Concerns related to the second timeline (holding off an election until November) included the possible loss of 'energy' for this initiative, the question of getting the school 'message' out during a general election, the rising costs of construction, and the possible passage of a state law effective November 1, 2016 preventing school districts failing referendum initiatives from conducting a new election within two (2) years. After thoughtful consideration, the Facilities Planning Committee asked the Superintendent to seek Board support for an April referendum election.



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