



# School District of Bayfield

Dear District Residents:

Thank you to everyone who attended the community information sessions this fall. It was very helpful to get thoughts about the district's building needs directly from community members.

Kevin Stranberg from Stranberg & Associates in Ashland compiled all of the comments from the 3 sessions. That report is attached to this letter for your review.

Both the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board and the entire Board of Education reviewed the information presented in order to understand the major issues and concerns from the community. After that review, the Board of Education has recommended that a community survey be conducted in order to get additional information.

The community survey will be available in early December. You will be given two options to complete the survey; online or via a paper copy sent to you via USPS. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey. We need everyone's input in determining the building needs for the district and to assist in developing a plan to meet those needs.

Once survey information has been reviewed, the Board of Education will make recommendations on next steps for the district. Next steps may include a referendum vote in early 2025. However, that decision has not been made at this time. More information from district residents is vital in determining when/if a referendum is needed.

Thank you for your involvement with the School District of Bayfield. If you want to talk with me about this process, feel free to contact me at 715-779-3201 or [bpaap@bayfield.k12.wi.us](mailto:bpaap@bayfield.k12.wi.us).

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REPORT: School District of Bayfield; Community Information Sessions  
September 2024

Background:

The Bayfield School District solicited Kevin Stranberg from Stranberg & Associates to conduct a series of three community informational sessions

designed to provide an update on the status of district facilities and seek input on potential renovation and/or new construction projects.

All sessions included basic facility information from representatives from DSGW Architecture and Kraus Anderson construction company.

Sessions were held in LaPointe, Red Cliff and Bayfield with a total of 40 people in attendance. All participants were engaged and interested in the efforts of the district. They provided insightful feedback with an overall feeling of support for the efforts of the district to provide great educational opportunities to the children of the district.

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#### Executive Summary:

As the facilitator of the informational session, the overriding themes from residents attending the informational sessions centered on:

- Schools are important to everyone, whether they have students enrolled there or not.
- Schools in small communities like Bayfield, Red Cliff and LaPointe create an important sense of place for everyone living there.
- Reviewing all options prior to determining the scope of the facility projects is important to all stakeholders: students, parents, staff, school board representatives and community members.
- A broader perspective of district viewpoints will be essential in the decision making process (possibly done by School Perceptions) due to the limited number of residents that participated in the information sessions.
- Visioning the next generation of students and how to meet their needs increases buy-in for everyone in the district. It is important to ask “what are the building needs of the School District of Bayfield for the year 2030? 2035? 2045?”
- Transparency of the process and a defined communication plan about its scope and progression are key to support from district residents.

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#### Observations:

From the input from people attending the informational sessions, the following themes emerged:

- District residents have a strong connection to the community in which they live, including the need for quality education of their children.
- School buildings are vital parts of their overall community connection and strong sense of place.

- Clarity of the need versus the want versus the “have to” requirements is required in order for community members to better understand the proposed projects.
  - The overall scope of the two proposed projects (LaPointe school new construction or renovation and mainland school renovations) were listed as items of interest and concern. Determination of priorities was a vital part of the discussion concerning scope.
  - For the LaPointe school, identification of the real need was noted: scope of the work, square footage needed, location of the project, need for expansion and flex space, renovation costs versus new construction costs.
  - Concerns were expressed about the following issues for the mainland school: land-locked location, limited parking, hazards from the incline of the roadways, the need for added gym space, concerns about the safety of the buildings so close to the ravine.
  - Statements were made about putting additional money into an old building with many facility and location difficulties versus a new structure (a new elementary or a new Pre-K – 12 school).
  - When looking at strictly number of students and where they live, residents suggested the need for a school building located physically closer to Red Cliff.
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#### LaPointe Information Session

##### Questions and Comments:

- The LaPointe School building was built in 1932 – it has historical significance for this community
- Does it have to be torn down? Could it be moved or repurposed? Community center? Housing options?
- Could it be sold and moved?
- Why build it toward the city parking lot? Are there other potential sites for new classrooms? What about on the north side? This community needs the parking lot space.
- Is the present mechanical room build enough to support expansion or replacement?
- What are the comparative sizes of new classrooms to current classrooms?
- Could it serve as a community center as well as a school? Could this question be included in the survey?
- What are the essential needs? Are there things that could wait?
- Could the gym size be increased? Is renovation of the gym space included in the potential plan? New and/or refinished floor? Include a stage?
- Is there a need for greater capacity? Families moving into the community? Increase in indigenous families on Madeline Island?

- Could three and four year old children receive instruction in this building? Right now they are off site.
- What would the potential third classroom be used for in the future? Space for mainland kids to come over? Space for island kids during inclement weather? Community use?
- Conceptually would it be stick-built on a concrete slab? Would there be in-floor heat?
- If new construction, would it have a smaller footprint than the current building? No lower level? More efficient use of space?
- It is important to be cost effective and to "do it right."
- If there are projects at LaPointe and in Bayfield, could the referendum be one question rather than two questions (one for each site)?
- What about the potential growth of school age kids on the island? Does the potential plan support additional students?
- Are there options for doing this project outside of a tax levy? Could in-kind donations be used for the project?
- Is the kitchen adequate for the present and future needs of the students?
- Bathrooms are expensive to build. How many bathrooms are planned? How big would they be? Male, female and family?

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Red Cliff Information Session  
Questions and Comments:

- What are the needs versus the wants for both campuses?
- What is the lifetime of the roof? For the mainland school, it is 20 years old. Is that the normal expected time to replace? What is the cost of such a replacement?
- Has there been discussion about building a new elementary school in Red Cliff?
- What would the cost be for a whole new school to replace the mainland school? What about an elementary school?
- Both LaPointe and mainland need a new school. How can we determine the whys and hows?
- What about the school being landlocked with no room for expansion?
- How can we solve the issues of limited parking, hazards from the incline of the roadways, the need for added gym space, concerns about the safety of the buildings so close to the ravine?
- How were the conceptual areas of needs identified and prioritized? Only Building and Grounds Committee?
- Have teachers and staff been asked about their needs and wants? What about student input?
- Is there a value to selling the mainland school? Potential housing (which is really needed in Bayfield)?

- Is there possible state and/or federal funds available for building or renovating? How could Impact Aid be incorporated into the financial plan? What about grants?
- Has it been discussed that the majority of the children are from the Red Cliff community so the school should be in Red Cliff?
- There seems to be a lack of transparency of this process. How can community members be given more and better information?
- The mainland needs a new school as much as LaPointe needs a new school. Why are we looking at just a renovation for the 500 kids at the mainland school and a total new building for the 11 island kids?
- It is important to note that the LaPointe School is important to the Red Cliff community as well – it is our history. Does it need updating or totally new? Does it need to include three classrooms for the limited number of kids? Could there be modular classrooms?
- Would transportation issues be greater or easier if the school were in Red Cliff?
- Will the new roof on the mainland school be a metal one?
- Can mainland kids go the LaPointe school? In the past there were barriers to that option for families.

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Bayfield Informational Session  
Questions and Comments:

- What will future needs be for parking and transportation around the current mainland location? Does there need to be consideration of fixing the parking problem for the mainland school? A parking structure of some sort?
- Is there a real need for a third classroom for the LaPointe school considering enrollment and projections?
- Is there a possibility that Ashland County would assist with renovation or construction of the LaPointe School?
- What about island children coming over to the mainland school for their education? Is it safe for very young students to get transported to and from the island every day? For example, on the wind sled?
- Could there be an elementary school both in town and at Red Cliff?
- Would the Town of LaPointe be interested in having/buying the island school for community use?
- Would the LaPointe school plan for renovation or new construction be ADA compliant?
- Would the mainland school plan for renovation be ADA compliant?
- How can the district solve the limitations of transportation on the ferry?  
 Note: with the MI Ferry change in ownership, cooperation has improved for school children and school employees.

- Could community recourses be used to defer or decrease the cost of the island renovation/construction? Building on the island has a built-in charge to get all supplies and manpower to the location.
- What is the real condition of the LaPointe school? Can it be successfully renovated and used for a long period of time? If so, why not consider renovation costs versus new construction costs?
- What is the status of the current renovation plan for the Lapointe school? The \$1.5 million dollar plan?
- Is the district looking at “just the essentials?” What about parking for the mainland school? What about a new gym? What are the other major needs for the mainland school not included in the present concepts?
- Is there an urgent need for the changes to the LaPointe School and the mainland school?
- Is the roof leaking on the mainland school now?
- How were priorities established? Should there be other options explored?