



# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

## Meeting Agenda Full Detail - Final City Council Work Session

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Monday, October 9, 2017

4:00 PM

City Hall Conference Room 2A

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Pursuant to due notice and call thereof a Special Meeting/Worksession of the Grand Rapids City Council will be held on Monday, October 9, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Conference , 420 North Pokegama Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota.

**CALL OF ROLL:** On a call of roll, the following members were present:

### Discussion Items

1. 17-0725 Elementary Schools Task Force Presentation
2. 14-0789 Review 5:00 PM Regular Meeting

**ADJOURN**



CITY OF  
GRAND RAPIDS  
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

## Legislation Details (With Text)

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**File #:** 17-0725      **Version:** 1      **Name:**  
**Type:** Agenda Item      **Status:** CC Worksession  
**File created:** 10/3/2017      **In control:** City Council Work Session  
**On agenda:** 10/9/2017      **Final action:**  
**Title:** Elementary Schools Task Force Presentation

**Sponsors:**

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:**

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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Elementary Schools Task Force Presentation

Kent Koerbitz – Operation Director at Blandin Paper Company

Current Board Chairperson for the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce.

Mindy Nuhring – Executive Director at River Grand Senior Living, Part-time Instructor at ICC

Board Member of the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce

How we got here:

Mindy was involved in the communications piece of trying to pass the 2015 bond referendum. When that bond referendum failed in the fall of 2015, Kent and Mindy joined a Chamber group that was made up of 6-7 Chamber members. This group wanted to analyze the details of the elementary school needs and determine whether there was, indeed, a space issue. They concluded in May of 2016 that there was a space issue that needed a solution.

In the fall of 2016, Kent and Mindy were asked by the School District if they would co-chair a community group that would further analyze the problem and try to find a community solution. They formed the Elementary Facilities Taskforce (EFT) in January of 2017 and invited many community members to join. The EFT was broken into three committees: a Building and Sites committee, a Finance committee and a Communications committee. The Building and Sites committee would look at the facilities themselves to find out their condition and whether they could be remodeled or replaced. The Finance committee was to analyze the financial details involved in remodeling, replacing and how much each would cost. The Communications committee would try to inform the public about what was going on and what the issues were.

The Building and Sites committee presented their findings to the EFT in early June 2017 and the entire EFT selected the best community plan to move forward with. This plan was then presented to the School Board in late June 2017 and was accepted as presented.

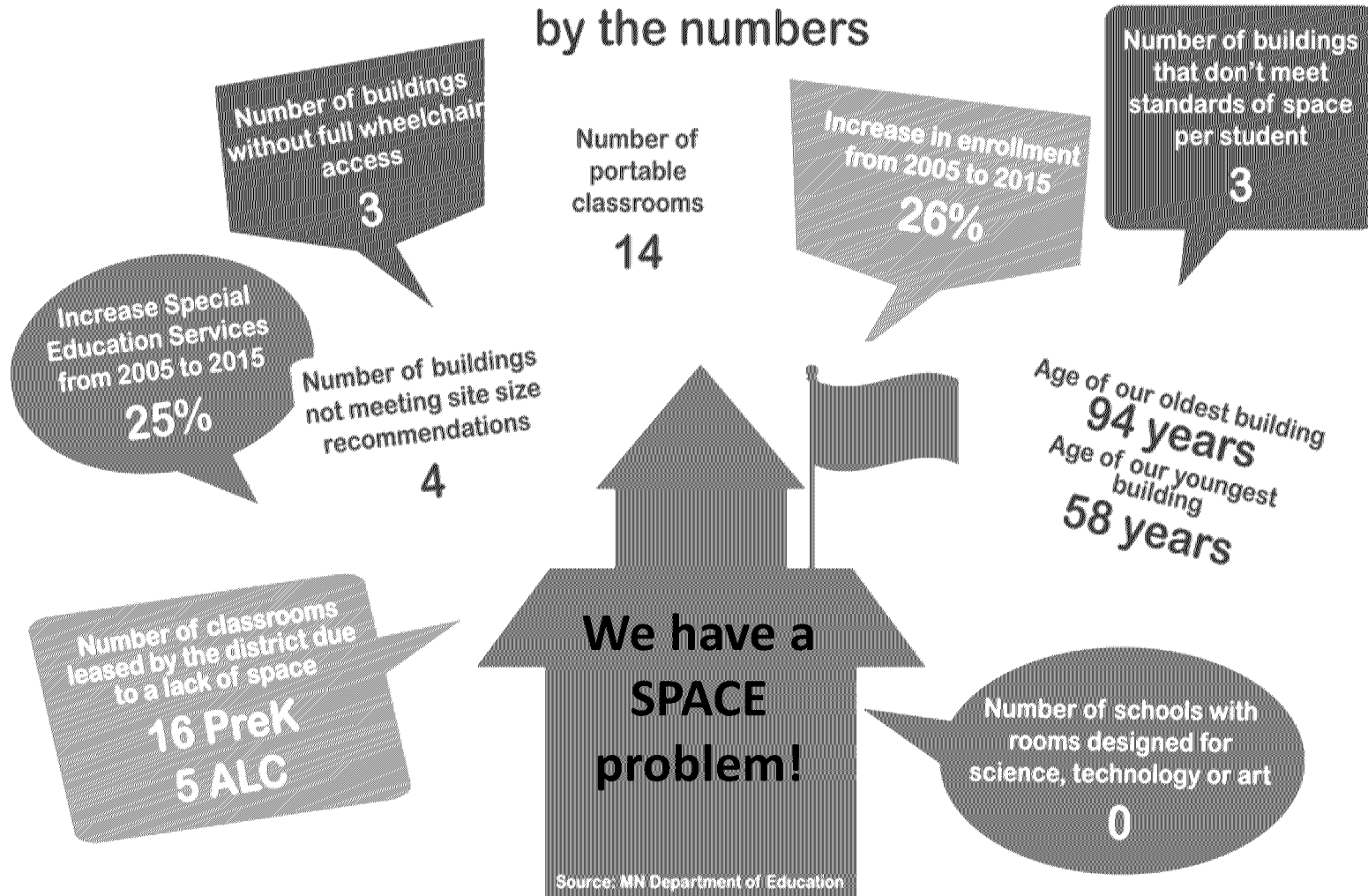
Since then, work to finalize building sizes and configurations, site selections or dispositions, total costs, financing and communication of the plan to the community have continued. A report to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education detailing how we have met their guidelines for a school referendum is due November 15<sup>th</sup>. Assuming the Commissioner approves the project, a referendum will be held Tuesday, February 13, 2018.

# We have a SPACE problem!

- The four Grand Rapids area Elementary schools were originally built for 44 sections of K-5 Students. They currently house 56 sections of K-4. There are an additional 10 sections of Grade 5 in the RJEMS.
- In 2007, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade was moved to the RJE Middle School because of space shortages at the Elementary school level, overcrowding the Middle School space. RJEMS was originally designed for 33 sections and now has 45 sections of classes in it with larger elementary classes moving up.
- 14 portable/temporary classrooms are in use at 3 of our Elementary's. Pre-K classes are in 16 leased classrooms. The Alternative Learning Center is in leased space.
- The lots Forest Lake and Murphy Elementary schools currently sit on, are too small to allow permanent additions without significant impact to their neighborhoods and high costs required to acquire the houses and additional land. Even if we could add on classrooms; the Gyms, Cafeterias, Library/Media areas and common spaces are too small for current enrollment as they were built to service 300 students per school and we are at 360+ and growing.
- The space we have is not all ADA compliant. Making it conform to federal law is expensive and in Cohasset it would be very expensive due to the buildings design.

The Elementary Facilities Taskforce (EFT) was formed to find solutions to our critical space problem

# Grand Rapids and Cohasset elementary schools by the numbers



## Why did last referendum fail? What we have heard

- ✓ Too much money
  - ✓ How were the dollars to be used
  - ✓ 900 student schools too large
  - ✓ Cohasset losing community school
  - ✓ No plan for sites
  - ✓ Riverview history
  - How would be teachers impacted?
  - What are the new boundaries for kids?
  - Community didn't see need
  - Lack of communication
  - Unanswered questions
  - Community doesn't see value in tax investment
- The District to work on**
- Important for the School District to work on this. Communications and Outreach here to assist**
- The voters will decide**

# Minnesota Department of Education

## GUIDE FOR PLANNING SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS IN MINNESOTA

**TABLE I  
SCHOOL SITE SIZE GUIDELINES**

SCHOOL LEVEL	SITE SIZE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	10-15 ACRES +
K-8 OR MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOL	25-35 ACRES +
K-12 SCHOOL OR SMALL HIGH SCHOOL	35-40 ACRES +
LARGE HIGH SCHOOL (>2,000 STUDENTS)	60 ACRES +
CAMPUS (TWO OR MORE SCHOOLS)	COMBINE SITE SIZES +
ALL SCHOOLS	<b>Plus</b> ONE ADDITIONAL ACRE FOR EACH 100 STUDENTS OF ESTIMATED STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND COMMUNITY USE/PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM CAPACITY, INCLUDING POSSIBLE ADDITIONS

Adherence to the “Guidelines” is checked by the Department of Education (DOC). The school district must submit the proposal and gain approval from the DOC Commissioner before a referendum can be held.

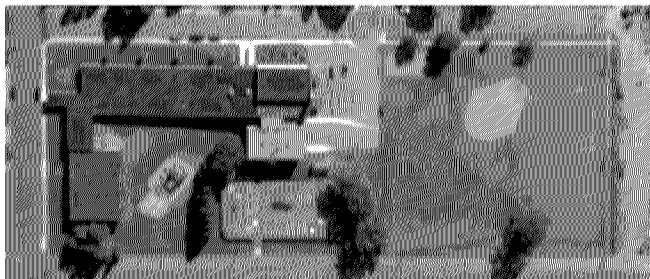
# Existing School Sites vs MDE Guidelines



Murphy = 5.0 acres vs 14-19



Cohasset = 7.0 acres vs 13-18



Forest Lake = 5.7 acres vs 14-19



Southwest = 8.5 acres vs 14 -19







**Forest Lake**  
Example:  
36 properties  
within green  
area to equal  
17 Acres

Yellow = Existing Acreage

Green = Property Acquisition to meet MDE Guidelines

## Estimated Property Acquisition costs for Existing Elementary Schools to meet Minimum MDE Standards

Forest Lake:	\$5,441,560 (36 properties)
Murphy:	\$4,382,280 (27 properties)
Southwest:	\$ 846,120 (City land, may be some swapping) (5 other properties)
Cohasset:	\$ 420,240 (3 properties)

*(Info Provided by FI Salter Co.)*

**Cohasset site CAN be expanded to meet MDE Guidelines**

**Murphy site CANNOT be expanded to meet MDE guidelines**

**Forest Lake site CANNOT be expanded to meet MDE guidelines**

**Southwest site CAN be expanded to meet MDE guidelines**

# Building Review Summary

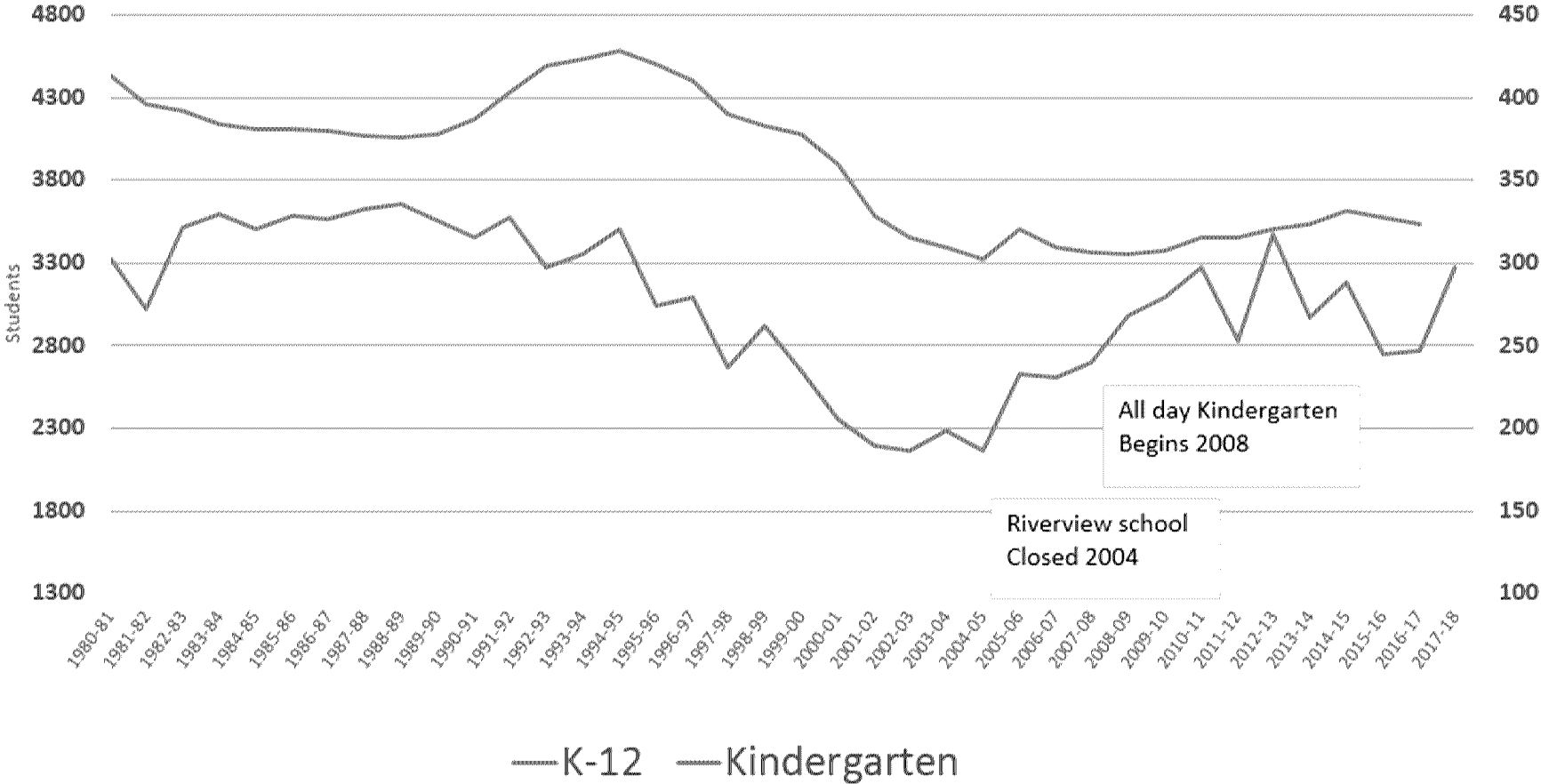
Consensus was reached by committee

- **Cohasset building is NOT suitable to remodel without replacing the core 1922 structure. Site CAN be made adequate.**
- **Murphy building IS suitable to remodel/renovate. Site NOT able to be made adequate given costs and neighborhood impacts.**
- **Forest Lake building IS suitable to remodel/renovate. Site NOT able to be made adequate given costs and neighborhood impacts.**
- **Southwest building IS suitable to remodel/renovate. Site CAN be made adequate.**

# Determining what meets our needs

- Planning is for 12 sections of K-5 (72 sections with 300 students/class) based on recent county birth rates and projected future class sizes. Schools were originally build for 44 sections of K-5. There are 66 sections in 2017-2018.
- 20 different options were developed and reviewed
  - 1 option was to remodel the 4 existing schools
  - 5 Options were for new schools only
  - 14 options had combinations of remodeling and/or new construction
- Most people were comfortable with schools of smaller than 6 sections or 900 students. Teachers and Administration prefer K-5 schools instead of K-2 and 3-5 schools.
- Keeping a community school in Cohasset was seen as valuable by the majority of the committee.
- Any new schools would need the ability to expand if required.
- Replacement of the old middle school with new housing resulted in measurable increases in neighborhood housing value and increased the City's tax base.

# Grand Rapids K-12 Enrollment vs. Kindergarten Enrollment



# How did we get here?

- From 1990 to 2005 elementary schools were closed due to declining enrollment and the need to manage/reduce costs.
- Since 2005 kindergarten enrollment has increased from 190 to 300 students requiring additions to the middle school, addition of 14 temporary classrooms to the existing elementary's and leasing of 20 classrooms to fulfill district obligations.
- It is not a question of if a new school(s) is required, it is a question of how much new space is needed, where should the space be located and what combination of existing assets and new investment is best for the community.

# Determining what meets our needs

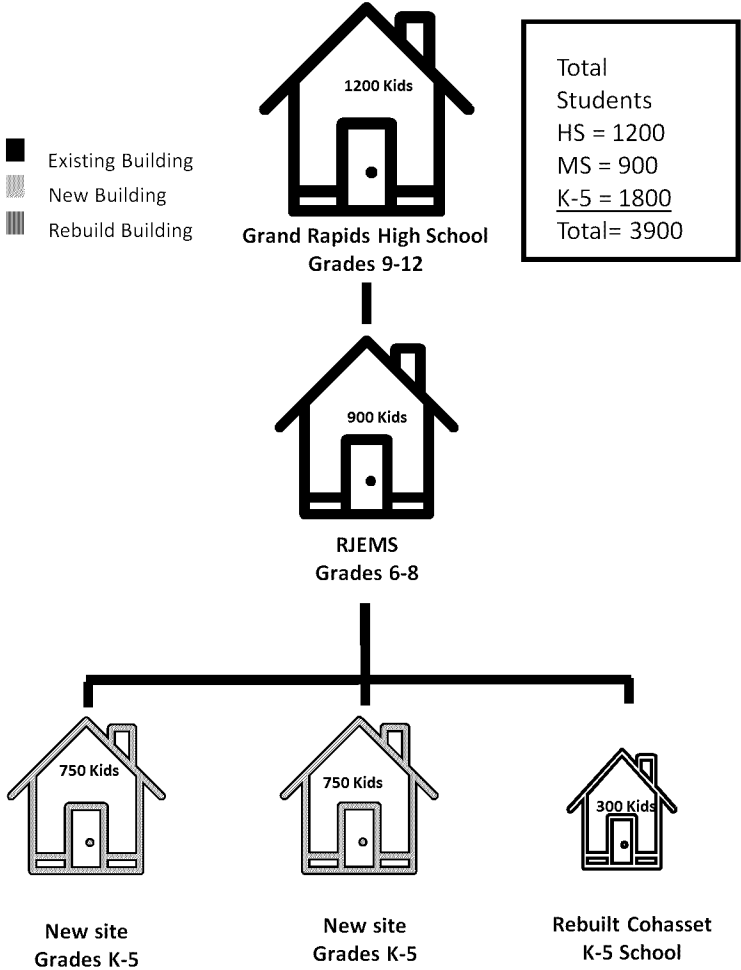
- **Recommend two new 750 student K-5 schools with capability to expand if needed, and a remodeled 300 student K-5 school in Cohasset.**
- **Recommend Southwest school be retained and used for mandated programs and elimination of leased space.**
- **Recommend Forest Lake and Riverview properties be redeveloped for housing.**
- **Recommend keeping costs less than \$70M**
- **Recommend further study of Murphy school use.  
(Hold for 4 yr olds, repurpose, demo... ??? \$20M+ if new building(s) for 4 yr olds)**

# Option 18

New construction  
plus rebuild  
Cohasset

**\$74M**

Preferred  
option  
**77%**





# Cohasset School Layout with potential City of Cohasset paid for enhancements



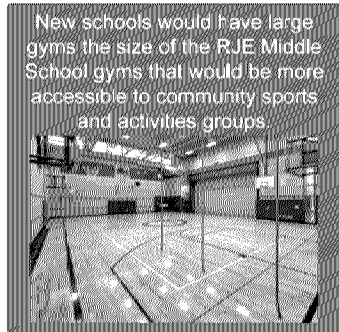
# New West neighborhood school



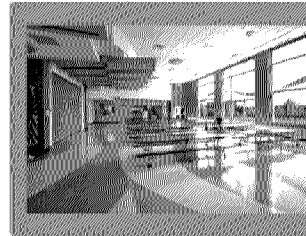
# New East neighborhood school



# What a new elementary school could look like



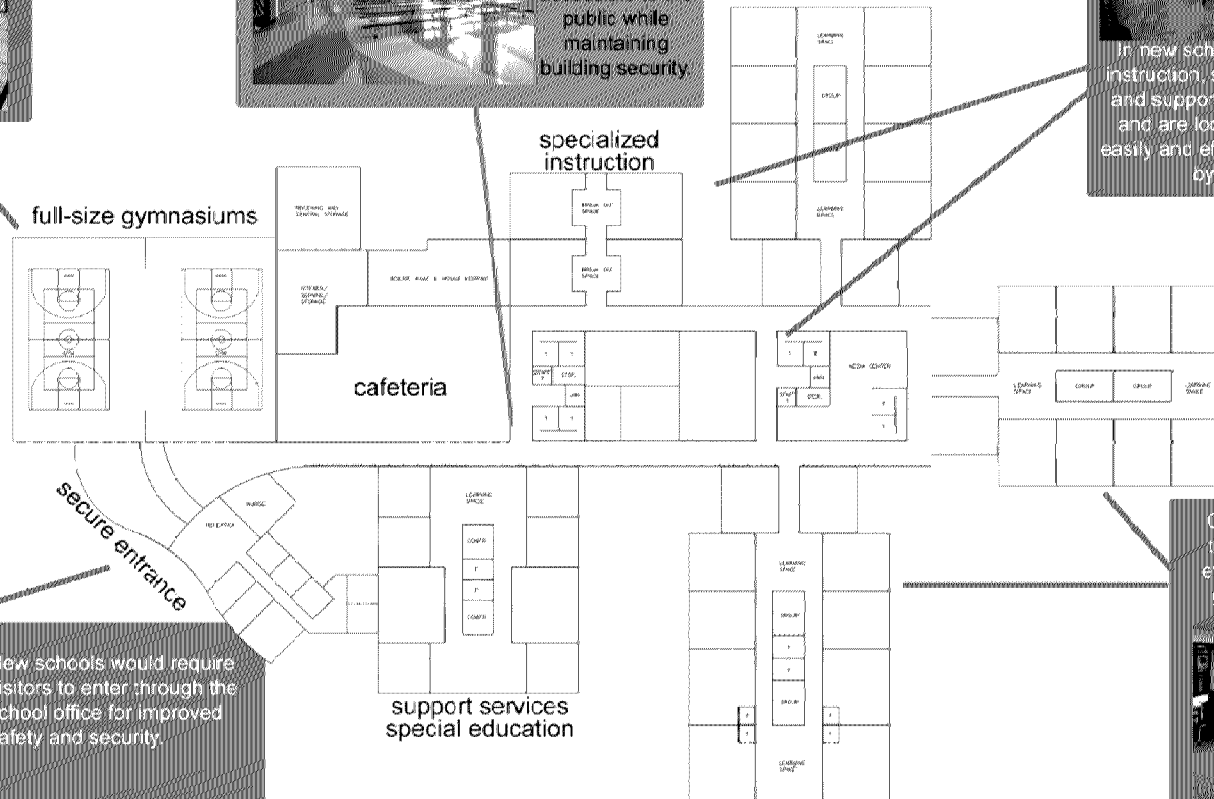
New schools would have large gyms the size of the RJE Middle School gyms that would be more accessible to community sports and activities groups.



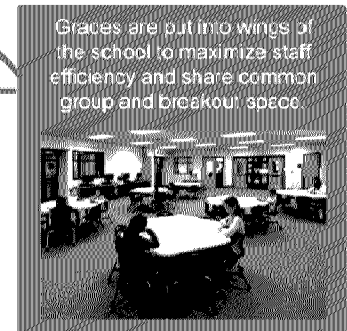
Gyms and cafeterias in new schools would be more accessible to the public while maintaining building security.



In new schools, specialized instruction, special education, and support services rooms and are located to be more easily and efficiently be shared by grades.



New schools would require visitors to enter through the school office for improved safety and security.



Grades are put into wings of the school to maximize staff efficiency and share common group and breakout space.

This is an example only to help provide a look at what a new school layout could look like. No architectural drawings will be available until there is opportunity for community input on the designs.

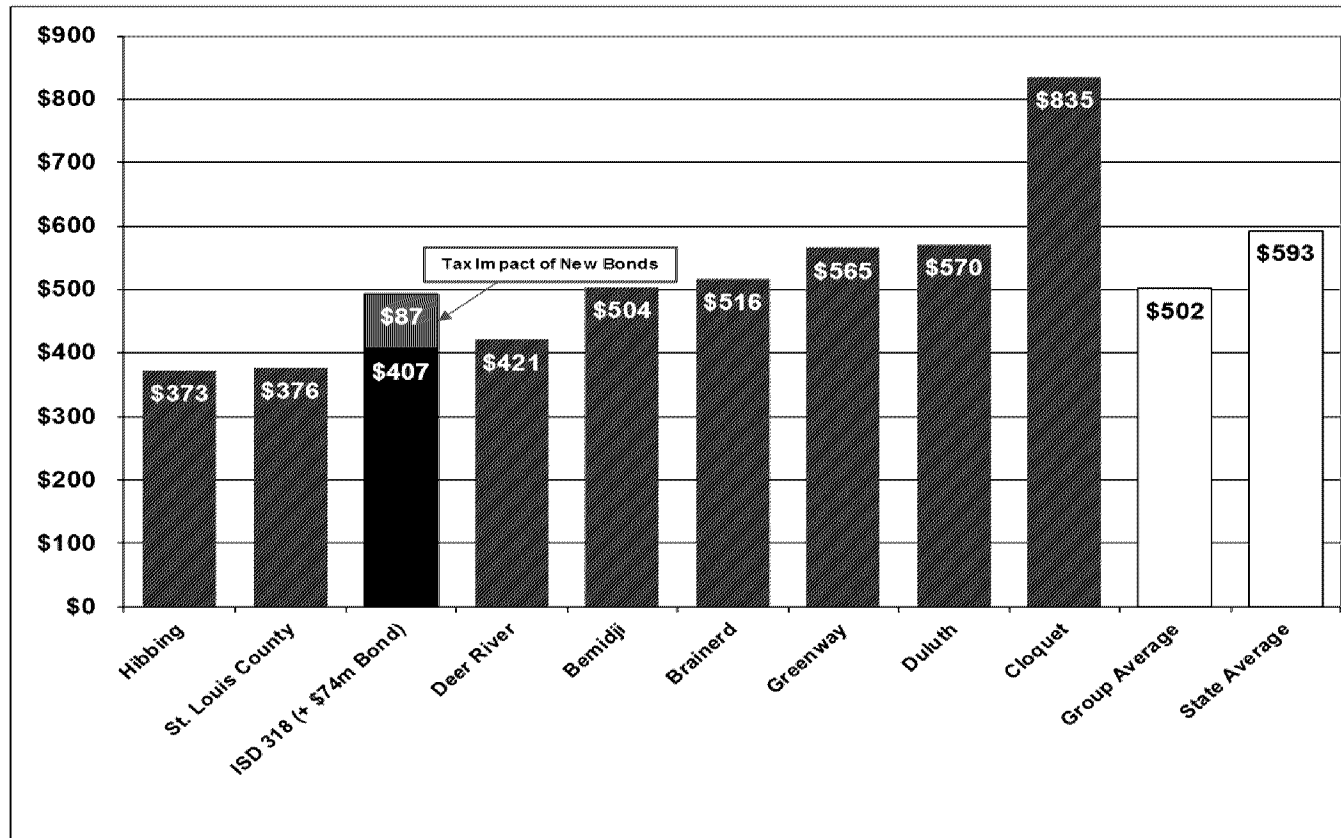
# Additional Recommendations

- **A priority needs to be placed on security and adequate parent drop-off and pick-up.**
- **A process to bring teachers and fiscally conservative community members together to ensure buildings are adequately sized but not overbuilt is needed.**
- **School Board should create a process for public input into determining new school boundaries.**
- **Teachers/union should participate in re-alignment of teaching assignments.**
- **The bus transportation plan needs review with more weight given to time children spend in transit. In part, this is driving high parent drop-off/pick-up rates. When school boundaries are re-aligned the transportation plan must also be updated.**
- **The EFT process was significantly impacted by current sites being inadequate based on MDE guidelines and few site options. Future projects need site options determined before starting.**
- **Inside and outside athletic spaces should be sized for community/multiple use.**

# ISD 318 – Comparison of Total School Taxes

## Itasca County, ISD 318, Public Schools

Total School Property Taxes, Payable 2017, on a Home with an Estimated Market Value of \$150,000



*Tax impact on a \$150,000 home is \$87 annually, or \$7.25 per month, compared with \$99 annually and \$8.28 per month in 2015*

Source: Pay 17 School Tax Report

# Thank you!! Questions?

The EFT is a joint venture of the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce and ISD 318  
The EFT consists of 3 committees: Finance, Communications and Buildings and sites  
Over 200 individuals participated and contributed in public meetings to develop this plan.

Formal Meetings with Community – 420 hours

Community Listening Sessions – 80 hours

Steering Meetings (co-chairs, administration, board) – 260 hours

Hours of Volunteer Time –

- Finance – 65 hours, Communication – 160 hours, Facilities - 1050 hours

## 2,070 volunteer hours to-date

For the full EFT presentation, visit [isd318.org](http://isd318.org) and click EFT Recommendation under the Facility Plan tab.

A recording of our presentation to the School Board is available on [watchictv.org](http://watchictv.org) under Streaming -> Government Meetings.