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East Troy School Board Receives Community Survey Report

Board takes auditorium 'off the table,' remains committed to referendum solution with minimal tax impact

EAST TROY, Wis. — At its July 7 meeting, the East Troy Community School Board received the results of a recently conducted community survey related to the district's facility needs.

"We are very thankful and appreciative that community members took the time to complete the survey and provide valuable feedback to our district and board," said Dr. Christopher Hibner, district administrator. "The board will use this information as it continues to determine referendum options to help address the district's facility needs toward addressing and enhancing learning environments that will help support our students and staff."

A total of 548 community members completed the survey. Among the findings was that 83.8 percent of all respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that facilities are important for student learning and quality teaching practices. In addition, 75.5 percent of all respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that needs should be addressed now.

About 80 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I would vote 'yes' on a referendum question if I felt it were the correct solution and it had a tax impact of \$0 per year on a \$200,000 home." When asked, "I would vote 'yes' on a referendum question if I felt it were the correct solution and it had a tax impact of \$50 per year on a \$200,000 home," approximately 63 percent of all respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed. The report noted that the number falls to just over 50 percent for non-parents. For the \$100 and \$150 options, support among all respondents dropped to 45.8 percent and 33.8 percent, respectively.

Furthermore, the survey represented a ranking of highest to lowest priority among four different items. The results were very close, with the high school needs ranking the highest and the elementary school second, with eliminating the tax impact third. Maintaining the site at Chester Byrnes/Doubek School was fourth.

The survey concluded by asking respondents to "provide any additional information to the board as it considers solutions to address the district's facility needs." In the survey report, three themes were identified from the responses. The first was that parents and non-parents expressed strong concern about taxes. A second theme noted that respondents wanted the board to focus on needs rather than wants. Of particular note, some respondents said they didn't believe a new bus garage is something the district needs.

The final theme was that there were strong opinions about an auditorium. Although some respondents indicated they favored it, most others noted strong opposition.

"The board takes the information from this survey very seriously. Community members should understand that the auditorium that was part of past referendums is off the table and the board is currently seeking referendum options that have no impact on taxes," said Ted Zess, school board president. "In the coming weeks, the board will present the community with a referendum

option that addresses as many of our needs as possible, while also respecting the wishes of all community members.”

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