



# Whitefish Bay

SCHOOL DISTRICT

*An Exceptional Place to Learn*

**Regular Business Meeting:**  
**Discussion of Potential Referendum Resolution**

January 22, 2026



## Objective(s)

The School Board will:


- **review the facilities survey results** to determine a funding amount and associated projects;
- work towards the **development of a possible referendum question** for the April 7, 2026 ballot.



# Our Guiding Compass: The Focus Plan

- Safe, caring, and inclusive schools
- Student-centered learning environments
- Educational equity and excellence
- **Stewardship and integrity**





**Whitefish Bay**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

# FOCUS PLAN

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VISION

An Exceptional Place to Learn

MISSION

The Whitefish Bay School District, in partnership with families and community, is student-centered with a tradition of educational excellence that:

- Supports the individual needs of the whole child in a safe, caring, and inclusive learning environment;
- Empowers students with the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and character necessary to thrive in an ever-changing, global society so that students are life, career, and college ready;
- Honors the diversity of all students and the pursuit of educational equity\*.

VALUES

**Educational Equity and Excellence:**  
We maintain high expectations for personal growth and achievement.

**Tradition and Innovation:**  
We acknowledge the past and commit to continuous improvement.

**Safety and Well-being:**  
We strive for a safe and welcoming environment that fosters individual and collective welfare.

**Individual and Community:**  
We develop the talents and skills of individual learners and collaborative teams.

**Stewardship and Integrity:**  
We serve through principled and strategic decision-making and allocation of resources.

GOALS

**An Exceptional Place to...**

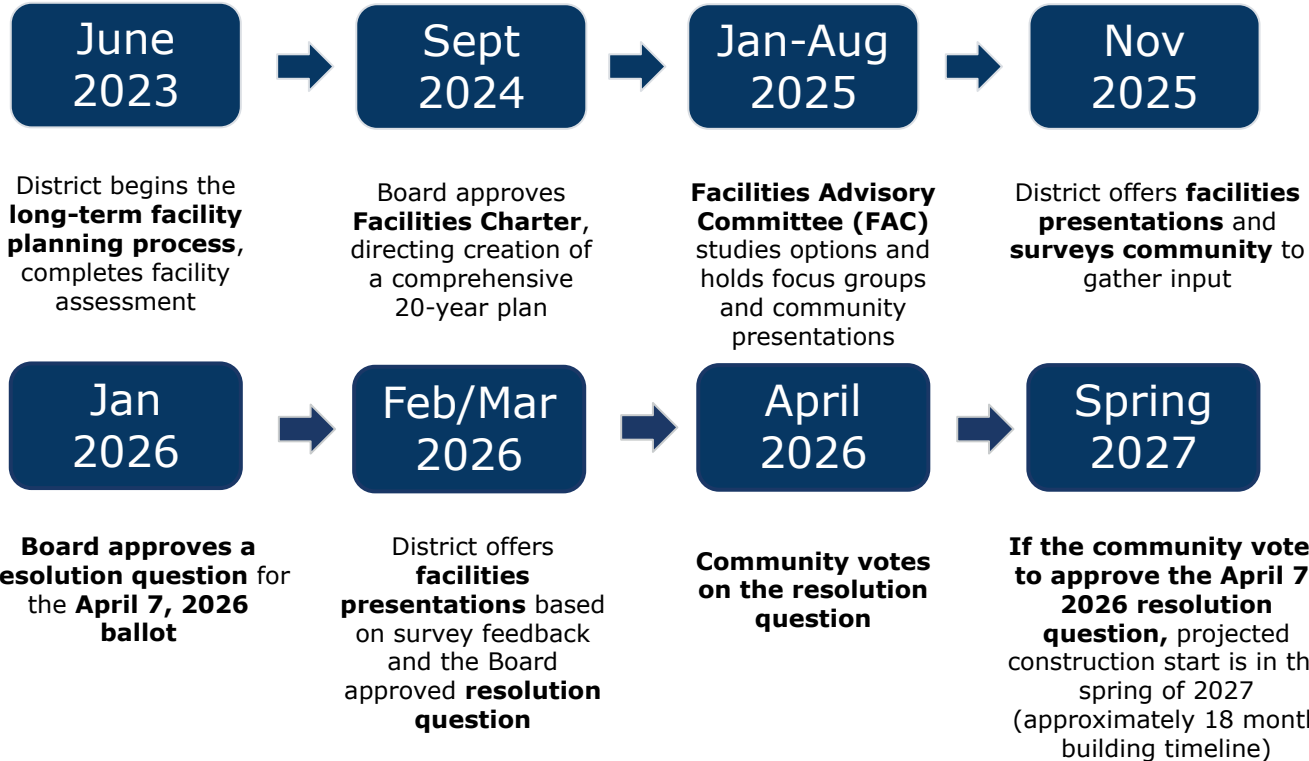
<p><b>Learn:</b> Every student will continuously grow to meet or exceed academic learning targets and social emotional competencies.</p>	<p><b>Work:</b> Every staff member will experience an environment where they are valued, developed, and supported.</p>	<p><b>Engage:</b> The community will be provided with opportunities to be involved in activities that promote collective growth, learning, and well-being.</p>
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\*Educational Equity "means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2023).

School Board Approved: April 10, 2024



# Facilities Planning Timeline: January 2026 Forward





# Facilities Planning Timeline: December to January

Date	Meeting/Communication
December 10	<b>School Board Committee of the Whole Meeting:</b> School Perceptions share facilities survey results with the Board with <i>public comment</i> .
December 11 to January 6	<b>Communication</b> in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Village News - Dec. 29</li><li>• School News - Dec 15, 22, and January 5/6</li><li>• Staff News - December 22</li><li>• Facilities website outlining the next School Board meetings</li><li>• Social Media (Facebook &amp; LinkedIn)</li></ul>
December 15	Jamie, Ben, and Brian will meet with the Village Board in closed session to discuss our survey results and current facilities planning timeline.
January 7	<b>School Board Committee of the Whole Meeting:</b> Discuss results, possible drafting of a resolution question, and <i>public comment</i> .
January 14	<b>School Board Committee of the Whole Meeting:</b> Possible review of resolution question and <i>public comment</i> .
January 22 (moving the January 28 meeting)	<b>School Board Business &amp; Committee Meetings:</b> Possible approval of resolution question and <i>public comment</i> (needs to occur by January 27, 2026 to be included on April 7, 2026 ballot).

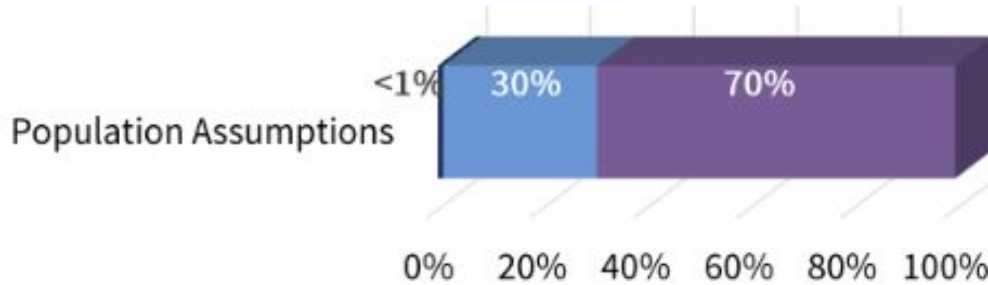


# Exceptional Place to Engage: Survey Results

- November 2025 survey window
- 2,234 respondents
- 45% response rate
- +/- 2.12% statistical margin of error



# Exceptional Place to Engage: High-Level Support



Weighted support for *Definitely yes* and *Probably yes*:

\$325M: 0.30 (24%) + 0.70 (8%) = **12.8%**

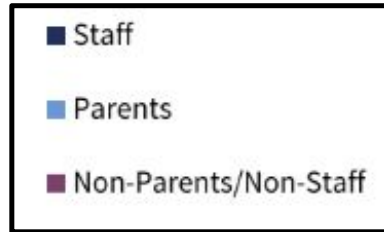
\$275M: 0.30 (30%) + 0.70 (12%) = **17.4%**

\$225M: 0.30 (51%) + 0.70 (25%) = **32.8%**

\$175M: 0.30 (63%) + 0.70 (39%) = **46.2%**

\$125M: 0.30 (76%) + 0.70 (57%) = **62.7%**

Smaller: 0.30 (85%) + 0.70 (77%) = **79.4%**



**62.7% support  
for a  
\$125.9M  
referendum**



# Safety, Security, and Infrastructure (\$58.2 Million)

## **Project 1: Addressing safety, security, and building infrastructure** *(Est. cost: \$58.2 million)*

The facility study identified critical infrastructure needs at the following schools: High School (\$35.5 million), Cumberland and Richards (totaling \$20.3 million), and Lydell (\$2.4 million). Many building systems are original (some nearly 100 years old) and are beyond their useful life.

**Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC):** Current systems are outdated, inefficient, and difficult to maintain. In addition, without air conditioning, classrooms are very uncomfortable in the summer and during warm school days.

**Fire Safety:** Any significant changes to our buildings would require updates to our fire and sprinkler systems to comply with today's standards.



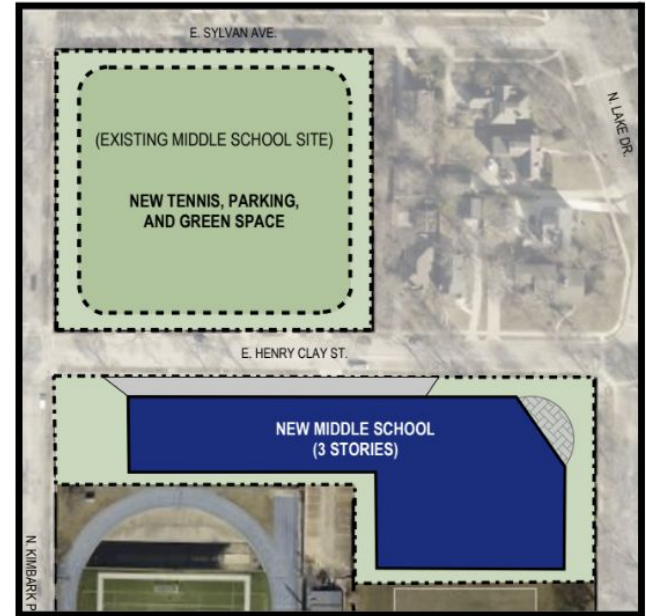
# Construct a New Middle School (\$67.7 Million)

## **Project 2: Building a new middle school** (Est. cost: \$67.7 million)

The Board explored a number of options to update the existing building, which is over 100 years old. Given its age, layout, and inflexible design, the cost to renovate is approximately the same as a new building.

**Therefore, the School Board is recommending building a new middle school on the south side of Henry Clay Street (see image).** The Veterans' Memorial Monument would be reestablished on or near its current site, and the tennis courts and parking lot would be relocated.

The School Board chose this option because it provides the best long-term investment in facilities, avoids disruption to teaching and learning, and provides the most design flexibility.





# Additional Infrastructure, Safety, Security, and Accessibility

**Whitefish Bay  
High School**  
(55.3% and 53.1%  
support)



**Additional Infrastructure** Update/replace plumbing and electrical systems, brickwork, foundations, etc. (*Estimated cost: \$10.7 million*)

**Additional Safety, Security, and Accessibility** Renovate main offices to better monitor and control visitor access and improve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility (*Estimated cost: \$2.1 million*)

**Cumberland/  
Richards  
Elementary**  
(55.7% and 51.9%  
support)



**Additional Infrastructure** Update/replace plumbing and electrical systems, brickwork, foundations, etc. (*Estimated cost: \$8.1 million*)

**Additional Safety, Security, and Accessibility** Reconfigure drop-off/pick-up areas, renovate main offices to improve security and accessibility, and improve front entrance ADA accessibility (*Estimated cost: \$7.6 million*)

**Lydell School  
and Community  
Center**  
(37.3% and 33.1%  
support)



**Additional Infrastructure** Update/replace plumbing and electrical systems, brickwork, foundations, etc. (*Estimated cost: \$1.0 million*)

**Additional Safety, Security, and Accessibility** Reconfigure drop-off/pick-up areas, renovate main offices to improve security, and improve front entrance ADA accessibility (*Estimated cost: \$0.6 million*)



# Total Project Breakdown

- **Safety, Security, and Infrastructure** at the High School (\$35.5 million), Cumberland & Richards (\$20.3 million), and Lydell (\$2.4 million) for a total of \$58.2 million
- **A New Middle School** for a total of \$67.7 million
- **Additional Infrastructure** for a total of \$19.8 million
- **Additional Accessibility, Safety, and Security** for a total of \$10.3 million

Total Project Cost - \$156.0 million

Minus School District Funding - \$20.4 million

**Proposed Option #1 Referendum Amount - \$135.6 million**



# School District Funding

To reach the full \$156 million project value (Option #6 identified in the memo to the Board on 1/14/26), we propose utilizing \$20.4 million from a strategic combination of:

- Fund 10 (General Fund) - \$6.9 million
- Fund 46 (Long-Term Capital Improvement Trust Fund) - \$10.0 million
- Fund 80 (Community Service Fund) - \$3.5 million



# Three Options Outlined

Option and Referendum Amount	Project Includes	School District Funding	Total Project Amount
Option #1 - \$135.6 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● New Middle School (\$67.7 million)</li><li>● Infrastructure, Safety, Security, and Accessibility (\$88.3 million)</li></ul>	\$20.4 million	\$156.0 million
Option #2 - \$140.0 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● New Middle School (\$67.7 million)</li><li>● Infrastructure, Safety, Security, and Accessibility (\$88.3 million)</li></ul>	\$16.0 million	\$156.0 million
Option #3 - \$125.9 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● New Middle School (\$67.7 million)</li><li>● Infrastructure, Safety, Security, and Accessibility (\$78.6 million)</li></ul>	\$20.4 million	\$146.3 million



# Option #1: What would be included in a \$135.6M referendum?

- **New middle school (\$67.7M)** - *Focus on Learning Environments, Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security*
  - Honor the Past - Veterans Memorial integrated into the new building
  - Flexible Design to Enhance Student Learning Spaces & Teaching Best Practices
  - Minimal Disruption to Learning During Construction of a New Building
- **Building Updates (\$67.9M) at Cumberland, Richards, High School and Lydell** - *Focus on Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security*
  - Replace failing HVAC systems
  - Upgrade fire and sprinkler systems to code
  - Improve plumbing and electrical systems
  - Increase accessibility and security at building entrances
  - Improve elementary drop off and pick up

\*In addition, \$20.4 million in school district funding would be used to address additional infrastructure, safety, security, and accessibility (\$156 million total project cost). Option #2 would include the same projects, but would use \$4.4 million less in school district funding. Option #3 would require a reduction of \$9.7 million from additional infrastructure, safety, security, or accessibility compared to Options #1 and #2.



# School District Tax Levy Impact

Referendum Amount (Not to Exceed)	Tax Impact per \$100k	Impact on Average Home (\$685,800)
<b>\$125.9 Million</b>	\$237	\$1,625.35
<b>\$135.6 Million</b>	\$260	\$1,783.08
<b>\$140.0 Million</b>	\$271	\$1,858.52

Preliminary tax impact estimates assume borrowing over a 21-year period at an interest rate of 5% to 5.25%. The District is scheduled to pay off the remaining debt obligations from the November 2009 referendum in 2026 and the impact of those final payments is included in these estimates. The current tax levy impact of the November 2009 referendum debt is \$57 per \$100,000 of property value.

Source: PTMA Financial Solutions



# Possible Resolution Draft

Based on the feedback from the January 14, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting, we have prepared the following draft. This language reflects the legal requirements of Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes while clearly outlining the scope of the project:

“Shall the School District of Whitefish Bay, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin be authorized to issue pursuant to Chapter 67 of the Wisconsin Statutes, general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$ [REDACTED] for the public purpose of paying the cost of a district-wide school building and facility improvement project consisting of: safety, security, building infrastructure and capital maintenance improvements at Whitefish Bay High School, Cumberland and Richards Elementary Schools, and Lydell School and Community Center; construction of and site improvements for a new middle school to replace the existing middle school; acquisition of land; demolition of the existing middle school and repurposing the site for district and community use; and acquisition of furnishings, fixtures and equipment?”



# Key Artifacts: [Supplemental Materials for this Presentation](#)

[Facilities Charter](#)

[10-Year Capital Improvement Plan](#)

[School Perceptions Presentation on 121025 \(additional analysis\)](#)

[Referendum Sample Questions from Franklin, Beaver Dam, and Burlington](#)



# Option #2: What would be included in a \$140M referendum?

- **New middle school (\$67.7M)** - *Focus on Learning Environments, Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, and Safety*
  - Honor the Past - Veterans Memorial integrated into the new building
  - Flexible Design to Enhance Student Learning Spaces & Teaching Best Practices
  - Zero Disruption to Learning During Construction of a New Building
- **Building Updates (\$72.3M) at Cumberland, Richards, High School and Lydell** - *Focus on Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, and Safety*
  - Replace failing HVAC systems
  - Upgrade fire and sprinkler systems to code
  - Improve plumbing and electrical systems
  - Increase accessibility and security at building entrances
  - Improve elementary drop off and pick up



# Option #3: What would be included in a \$125.9M referendum?

- **New middle school (\$67.7M)** - *Focus on Learning Environments, Aging Infrastructure, Accessibility, Safety, and Security*
  - Honor the Past - Veterans Memorial integrated into the new building
  - Flexible Design to Enhance Student Learning Spaces & Teaching Best Practices
  - Zero Disruption to Learning During Construction of a New Building
- **Building Updates (\$58.2M) at Cumberland, Richards, High School and Lydell** - *Focus on Infrastructure, Safety, and Security*
  - Replace failing HVAC systems
  - Upgrade fire and sprinkler systems to code