

A New Direction Together

A Restructure of the Wausau School District

Improving the experiences for students, their families, and our staff together.



An Important Message to the Community

We want your students to have the very best experiences possible here in the Wausau School District. That means having equal access to all of the amazing opportunities before them so that they will be college, career, and life ready by the time they leave us.

We are the stepping stone to their future and we need to make sure they have every tool necessary so that it's the brightest it can be!

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An Important Message to the Community

- 
- Planning and feedback processes are never perfect. But, here's what we want you to know:
- We pride ourselves on transparency. Nothing is being hidden. We continue to engage in an open and honest dialogue with the Wausau School District community.
 - **CAUTION:** There is misinformation and missing context circulating in the media and online.
 - For more than a year, we've been actively collecting and reviewing parent, staff, and community input.

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An Important Message to the Community

- ★ We're so glad that so many people have been involved in this conversation since its beginning! THANK YOU for getting involved and sharing your thoughts!
- ★ If you're just joining the conversation -- welcome! We're glad you're here! THANK YOU for being willing to get involved!

We're going to do great things for our students together!

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So, Let's Take a Step Back

A Restructure of the Wausau School District

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Our Work Together So far:



- ★ Did you know? Restructuring in the Wausau School District has been a conversation for the better part of a decade.
- ★ Surveys in 2019 & 2021 show there is community interest in a restructure (More on this in a second...)
- ★ The April 2022 referendum question was modified before the community voted. The Board pulled \$60 million worth of work at our elementary schools to make room to have this conversation. Here are the discussions:

1. [January 10, 2022](#)
2. [January 17, 2022](#)



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A Look Back: Donovan Community-Wide Survey

October 2021

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Donovan Community-Wide Survey

- ★ The purpose of this survey was to get feedback about the 2022 referendum, but we also sought feedback about a possible restructure.
- ★ The full survey is available on our website, [wausauschools.org](https://www.wausauschools.org), but the following slides are examples of the questions related to restructuring.
- ★ **IMPORTANT NOTE:** "All" refers to everyone who submitted responses. "Comparison" refers to those who submitted responses, but are not staff members or parents of current Wausau School District students.
- ★ **The results of this survey are 1 of many factors that led us to doing more serious work around restructuring.** ★

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Donovan Community-Wide Survey

Question: I would support merging two or more elementary schools to accomplish the goals listed above.

	ALL		COMPARISON
Strongly Agree	21.52%	56.96% Strongly Agree Or Agree	17.59%
Agree	35.44%		39.66%
Disagree	25.54%		28.20%
Strongly Disagree	17.50%		15.55%
			57.25% Strongly Agree Or Agree

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Donovan Community-Wide Survey

Question: I would support merging two or more elementary schools to accomplish the goals listed above even if it impacts the school(s) where children from my family attend.

	ALL		COMPARISON
Strongly Agree	19.25%	53.8% Strongly Agree Or Agree	15.43%
Agree	34.55%		38.43%
Disagree	26.58%		28.78%
Strongly Disagree	19.61%		17.36%

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Donovan Community-Wide Survey

Question: I would support a dual-campus model, based on the description above, to ensure all high school students have access to the same level of programming.

	ALL		COMPARISON
Strongly Agree	29.98%	65.23% Strongly Agree Or Agree	24.03%
Agree	35.25%		38.63%
Disagree	18.33%		22.32%
Strongly Disagree	16.44%		15.02%

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Continuing Our Work Together So far:



- 2 subcommittees explored a possible restructure
 - Dozens participated, but the entire community was welcome to attend.
 - Secondary: Members explored a 9-12 model, 9-10 and 11-12 high schools, 8-9 and 10-12 high schools, an academy model, and staying as we are now.
 - Most promising: An 8-9 and 10-12 model.
 - Elementary: Members explored various merger options.

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The Full Timeline



Why? We want you to understand the lengths we went to, to get community input and highlight the broad & deep conversations that have happened over the last year and more!

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OUR TIMELINE



Morris Leatherman Survey

In it, we asked about creating a 1-high school 2-campus configuration. (Results on the next slide.)



Oct. 2019

2nd Referendum

Fails: \$148.8M: Updates to all schools
Passes: \$4M for additional Pupil Services staffing



April 2021

Referendum Community Input Sessions

To help us build out the next referendum question
Nov. 8 and 22 (John Muir)



Nov. 2021

The community said leave the closing/merging of schools out of the 2022 referendum proposal. So, we listened.

Nov. 2020



1st Referendum Fails
\$155M: Updates to schools, plus would have merged Lincoln into Grant
\$3M for additional Pupil Services staffing

Sept. 2021



Donovan Community Survey
Helped with referendum planning.
In it, we asked about a dual campus model and thoughts on merging elementary schools. (Results on next slide.)

Jan. 2022



Board Passes Referendum Plan
Board decides they want to look at restructuring. So, they pulled \$60 million worth of elementary work out of referendum.

OUR TIMELINE



**Referendum
Information Shared
with Community**
This included community
listening sessions, mailers, social
media postings, etc.



Jan. 2022

May 2022

July 2022

April 2022

June 2022

**August
2022**



Referendum Passes
\$119.8M: Updates to schools.

**Subcommittees
Begin Meeting**

**Subcommittees
Continue Meeting**

Restructuring is a solution. 8-9, 10-12 model emerges as the one worth exploring. They ask to expand input.

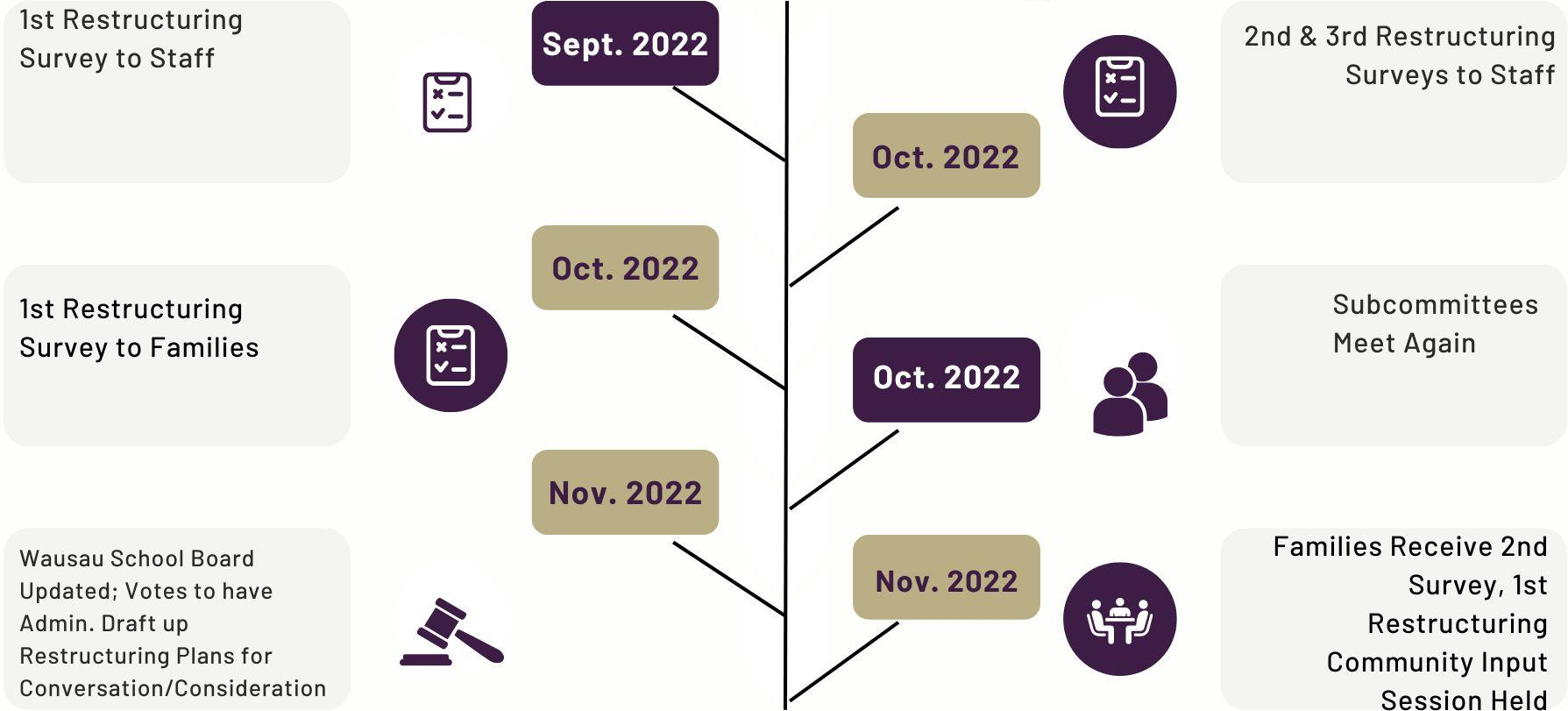
**Conversations Begin about
Forming Subcommittees to
Address Challenges & See if
Restructuring is a Solution**



**Subcommittees
Continue Meeting**



OUR TIMELINE



OUR TIMELINE



Subcommittees Meet Again



Nov. 2022

Dec. 2022



Second Restructuring
Community Listening
Session

Dec. 7 at Wausau East

Meeting with PTOs,
Families, and Staff



**Dec. 2022 -
Jan. 2023**

Jan. 2023



Families
Receive Third
Survey

Formal Restructuring
Proposal to the Board



Jan. 2023

Feb. 2023



Restructuring
Conversations
Continue with
Board/Community

Communication Efforts

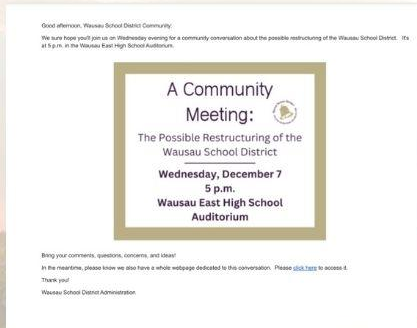


A Restructure of the Wausau School District

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Communications Efforts Part 1

- ★ Website (Created Future of the Wausau School District webpage)
 - [Click here](#) to view it.
- District & School Newsletters
- Social Media
- Email Communications to Families & Staff



Dear Wausau School District Families:

Here at the Wausau School District, we're working hard every single day to ensure that your students are college, career, and life ready by the time they graduate. At the same time, we're also looking ahead at our own future; ensuring that it's a staple in this community for generations and generations to come.

That said, right now, the Wausau School District is facing a number of long-term challenges that are starting to impact your students and our staff. Some of the challenges include declining enrollment, unequal staff working conditions across our schools, unequal student access to programming and long-term financial challenges. Did you know there's an automotive program at Wausau East that's not offered at Wausau West? That's just one example of the differences in student programming.

What we are doing now is trying to figure out how we best address the challenges we face. To do that, we need your help. We've already started a conversation with our 1,200 staff members and now we'd like to begin a conversation with you.

So, over the course of the next couple of months, we're going to be reaching out to you with a series of videos that explain the challenges we face and some of the potential solutions. In addition to the videos, there will also be opportunities for you to provide us with your feedback, comments, questions, and concerns, both online and in-person.

So, here's our ask of you now:

- Please take a few minutes and **watch this video**. It goes over the challenges we face and the potential solutions.
- Once you watch the video, please complete this survey. You can access it by clicking **here**. You can also scan the QR code that you'll see near the end of the video with your smartphone. The survey will only take a few minutes of your time. We just ask that you complete it by November 1st, if you can.
 - If you need a paper copy of the survey - please call the Longfellow Administration Center at 715-261-0500 and we will gladly get you one.

Once the survey closes on November 1, we will review your feedback; reading through each and every one of your responses. Following that, we'll share with you another video and another opportunity for your feedback.

Please know we will have two in-person options where you can learn even more and get your comments, questions, and concerns addressed. Those meetings are scheduled for November 16th at 5 p.m. at Wausau West and December 7th at 5 p.m. at Wausau East. We will also live stream those meetings. We'll share more details about that in the coming weeks.

As always, thank you for taking the time to get informed on the challenges we face and for sharing your feedback; we truly value your partnership. We also are ever so grateful that you chose us to educate your child(ren). It is truly a privilege.

Thank you,

Dr. Keith Hills
Superintendent
Wausau School District

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Communications Efforts Part 2



- Multiple advertisements placed in the City Pages (Wausau's free newspaper!)
- **Extensive** media coverage:



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Future Communications Efforts

- ★ Continue to Update our Website
 - [Click here](#) to view it.
- ★ Continue Social Media Presence
- ★ Continue Mentions in Newsletters
- ★ Continue to have Regular Communication with Parents & Staff
 - Emails/Letters
 - Videos
 - Surveys, etc.
- ★ Continue to Engage our Media Partners
- ★ Sending out Mailers

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Transportation

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Transportation Timeline

- ★ We have been working with First Planning on development of a feasibility study for transportation under the proposed restructure plan
- ★ Since the January 23rd Board Meeting:
 - We have exchanged the data needed to conduct this partial feasibility study
 - Analysis has been completed



Transportation



- ★ Teams Involved:
 - Business Services Department
 - First Student
 - MetroRide
 - City/County Transportation Consultants

- ★ Assumptions:
 - Allow for flexibility on bell times for all schools
 - Allow for transfer buses for secondary students
 - Plan to maintain current guidelines for bus ride lengths
 - Currently, 31 students have bus rides of more than a hour in the morning.
 - Currently, 73 students have bus rides of more than an hour in the afternoon.
 - Continue to utilize MetroRide system for all secondary students living outside a 2-mile radius from their school wherever MetroRide is available

Secondary Curriculum Development

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Collaborative Secondary Curriculum Development

- ★ • **Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood**
 - Team Building
 - Celebrate Successes
 - Share and Compare
- ★ • **Think Win-Win**
 - Abundance Mindset
 - Common Goals & Touchstones
- ★ • **Synthesize**
 - East Side + West Side = "Wausau" (Third Alternative)

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Secondary Curriculum Development



Spring of 2023

- Form 5-12 department and specialty teams (teachers, counselors, coordinators, principals)
- Participate in research and professional learning
- Compare and evaluate current offerings across buildings
- Begin brainstorming scope and sequence and potential course offerings within content areas/departments
- Begin vertical alignment work



Summer 2023

- Continue developing scope and sequence and potential course offerings within content areas/departments
- Begin cross-department communication and alignment
- Continue vertical alignment work

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Secondary Curriculum Development



Fall 2023

- Seek staff feedback on initial work
- Continue developing scope and sequence and potential course offerings within content areas/departments
- Continue cross-department communication and alignment



Spring 2024

- Continue developing scope and sequence and potential course offerings within content areas/departments
- Continue cross-department communication and alignment

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Secondary Curriculum Development



Summer 2024

- Revise current course curricula (summer curriculum projects)
- Develop new course proposals (summer curriculum projects)



Fall 2024

- Seek Board approval for any new course proposals
- Finalize Academic & Career Planning Guide (course book) for middle and high school registration
- Communicate updated options with students and families



Winter 2024-25

- High school registration
- Middle School registration

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Secondary Curriculum Development



Spring 2025

- Write curriculum for new courses
- Select resources for new courses
- Build staffing and scheduling plans



Summer 2025

- Continue curriculum development
- Continue professional learning



Fall 2025

- Implement updated curricula in restructured schools

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Secondary Curriculum Development



- **Assumptions made:**

- Teachers play a critical role in curricular decisions and development
- Effective curriculum development requires time for:



- **What are the possibilities/outcomes?**

- Enhance Academic & Career Planning Connections
- Add Integrated Offerings
- Create Unique Middle School (5-7) and Junior High (8-9) Opportunities

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Our Future Pathways



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Improved Pathways

5-7: Explore

Full Exploratory ACP
experience for all
students:

- Art
- CTE
- Foreign Language
- Music/Band
- Physical
Education/Health

8-9: Inspire

Enhanced facility for 8th
grade with more course
options:

- Health Science
- Tech Ed
- Education Pathways
- Culinary
- Automotive
- Agriculture

10-12: Launch

Specialized classes

Blended Pathways

12th grade: Career
Capstone experience

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Improved Pathways

**Middle
School**

All students explore



Junior High

Inspire learning



Senior High

Refine skills & launch

12th Grade Career Capstone Experience

- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Internship Employment
- Youth Apprenticeship
- Practicum/Job Shadow
- Supervised Agricultural Experience
- Certification
- Final Projects
- Portfolio
- Field Trips

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Arrive at Career Capstone Experience

★ What is 12th Grade Career Capstone?

A student's experience that allows them to develop a competitive advantage through engagement in the community.

- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Certifications
- Internships
- Dual Credits
- Final Projects
- Portfolio
- Capstone Field Trip
- Practicum

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Blended Pathways- Contextualized Learning

- ★ Geometry & Construction leading to a capstone experience in construction
- ★ Food Science (currently offered) leading to ServSafe certification
- ★ AMPED on Algebra: Algebra 1 in Manufacturing Processes, Entrepreneurship and Design
- ★ Sports Medicine: Health classes, YAM, Body, Structure & Function (Science), Athletics Practicum
- ★ Sports Management: Marketing, Broadcast, Graphics, Daktronics, Athletics Practicum
- ★ Future Teachers: Team Teach FCS with other interested content areas (Social Studies, English, etc.)
- ★ Welding & Art

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Process of Developing Pathways

- ★ Staff involvement
- ★ Reestablish Advisory Groups for emerging pathways
- ★ We work closely with industry partners on curriculum, facilities, and resources
 - Industry certifications
 - Dual credits
 - Facility requirements & equipment
 - Authentic learning experiences
 - Work-based learning opportunities

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Example: STEM Pathway

5-7th Grade

ACP Class
STEM Innovations
Engineering/Mag Lev

8th & 9th Grade

STEM Innovations
FAB Lab 1
FAB Lab 2
Intro to Engineering

10-12th Grade

Principles of Engineering
Digital Engineering & Architecture
Civil Engineering
Engineering Design & Development
Career Capstone Experience

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Construction

- Building Trades I (Jr High)
- Building Trades II (Sr High)
- Geometry & Construction (Sr High)
- Building Trades III (ACE Curriculum)
- Capstone Certification

Transportation (Accelerated Pathway)

- Occupational Mechanics I
- Occupational Mechanics II
- Pre Apprenticeship in Automotive or Diesel

Entrepreneurship

- Graphics I
- Marketing I
- AMPED Algebra
- Accounting I
- Accounting II

Engineering

- STEM Innovations
- Engineering Mag Lev
- IED
- POE
- EDD

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Culinary

- Culinary I
- Culinary II (Dual Credit)
- Culinary III
- Food Science
- Capstone Certification ServSafe

Sports Medicine

- Basic Health
- Young Adult Medicine (CPR Certification)
- Body Structure & Function (Dual Credit)
- Intro Athletic Training & Sports Med
- Advanced Athletic Training

Sports Management

- Intro to Marketing & Broadcast
- Officiating (Certification)
- Advanced Marketing (Daktronics/Neptun)
- Advanced Broadcasting
- Intro to Coaching Leadership

Digital Media Production

- Intro to Marketing
- Officiating (Certification)
- Advanced Marketing (Daktronics/Neptun)
- Advanced Broadcasting
- Intro to Coaching Leadership

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Staffing

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Staffing With Restructuring in Mind



Assumptions:

- 4K and EC move to Early Learning Center
- 5th Grade move to Mann or Muir
- 8th & 9th Grade move to Junior High (East)
- 10th - 12th Grade move to Senior High (West)



Impacts to Assumptions:

- Staff Interest & Preferences
- Licensure (Who can teach what?)
- Specialized training & experiences (PLTW, AP, IB, Dual Credit, etc)

Note: Staff have been encouraged to review their certifications NOW and to determine if they are interested in expanding/adding options to their license areas ahead of this transition.

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Staffing Change Based on Assumptions

(Built into the pro forma you saw at the last meeting because we had to run this information as part of that preparation.)

Current Configuration	WEST	EAST	MUIR	MANN	ELEM SCHOOLS	
	12th 11th 10th 9th 110 Teachers	12th 11th 10th 9th 75 Teachers	8TH 7TH 6TH 84 Teachers	8TH 7TH 6TH 63 Teachers	5TH 4TH 3RD 2ND 1ST K 4K & EC 162 Teachers (K-5)	
New Configuration	SR HIGH	JR HIGH	MUIR	MANN	ELEM	ELC
	12th 11th 10th 138 Teachers	9TH 8TH 95 Teachers	7TH 6TH 5TH 69 Teachers	7TH 6TH 5TH 51 Teachers	4TH 3RD 2ND 1ST K 130 Teachers (K-4)	4K EC Childcare Wrap Around
Net Change					-11	

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STAFFING TIMELINE



Retirements Due &
Staffing Survey Shared
with Staff



Dec. 2024

Student Registrations
and Staffing Survey
Results are Reviewed



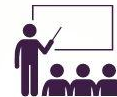
Jan. 2025

Initial Staffing
Projections are Made by
Level/Building Based on
Jan. 2025 Information



Feb. 2025

**March/April
2025**



Finalize Staffing Assignments
and Planning, which includes
communication to any
impacted teachers related to
their assignments for 2025-
2026

May 2025

Board Approves 2025-
2026 Teacher Contracts.
Support Staff Staffing
Plans are Finalized,
Communicated



Reallocation of Referendum Funds

A Restructure of the Wausau School District

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Reallocation of Referendum Funds

★ From the January 10, 2022 Board Meeting:

"Some of these investments shouldn't be made if we are going to look at right-sizing the district." - Karen Vandenberg

"If there is going to be a reduction in cost, it makes sense to target the elementary schools. We are partially addressing the need for some buildings to be considered for consolidation some day." - Lance Trollop

"We should be looking into where the need is greatest now instead of putting money into buildings that we might decide not to use down the road." -Jim Bouche

"Take time to come up with a long-term strategy for the elementary schools that will meet the needs of the district down the road." -Pat McKee

[Click here to watch the Board Meeting](#)

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Reallocation of Referendum Funds

- ★ NEED: An update to Wausau West
 - Still occurring with a new addition
- ★ NEED: Create a new space for Wausau Area Montessori Charter School
 - Still occurring in a manner that is preferred by the Montessori Governance Council
- ★ Don't invest in a school that will not be retained by the Wausau School District. It does not make sense to invest in Grant Elementary if we are going to sell it. Reallocate those funds to support the restructuring plan.

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Example: The Future of Thomas Jefferson & Grant Together

A Restructure of the Wausau School District

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The Future of Thomas Jefferson & Grant Together

"The fact remains that EVERY child deserves the best education possible. Let's face it, these children are the ones who will be checking us out at the grocery store, solving global warming, curing cancer, building our houses, or taking care of the elderly. We NEED them to be successful. The learners should be at the forefront of whatever plan is chosen. I believe that merging schools and resources will help to make that happen." - From a Teacher

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The Future of Thomas Jefferson & Grant Together

Begin with the End in Mind:

- ★ Teacher teams of 4 or 5 members equally distributing work and allowing intervention groups.

"Together is better. This would be huge for planning and consistency in meeting our learners' needs."

- ★ Special Education and Interventionist efficiencies allowing more focus.

"We would be able to more specifically group students to provide even better services. For me to be a better part of the teacher team."

- ★ Perfectly aligned referendum planning to enhance this plan.

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The Future of Thomas Jefferson & Grant Together

Putting First Things First:

★ We have some single teacher teams/small teams:

"I can't do this again alone. I need a teaching partner, a planning partner for next year. You feel like you can't get it all done."

"Having a larger professional team to share ideas about students, their growth, new professional learning with is exciting."

★ Staff traveling to 3 or more schools per day

"I would like to have one spot, maybe even two locations, to store my resources at. It's a lot to carry it all, especially when we have testing to administer on students."

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The Future of Thomas Jefferson & Grant Together

Synergize

This plan isn't losing our identity, it is growing our future.

"The impediment to action advances action.
What stands in the way becomes the way."
-Marcus Aurelius

We are excited to work through this new
Wausau. What if we SOAR!



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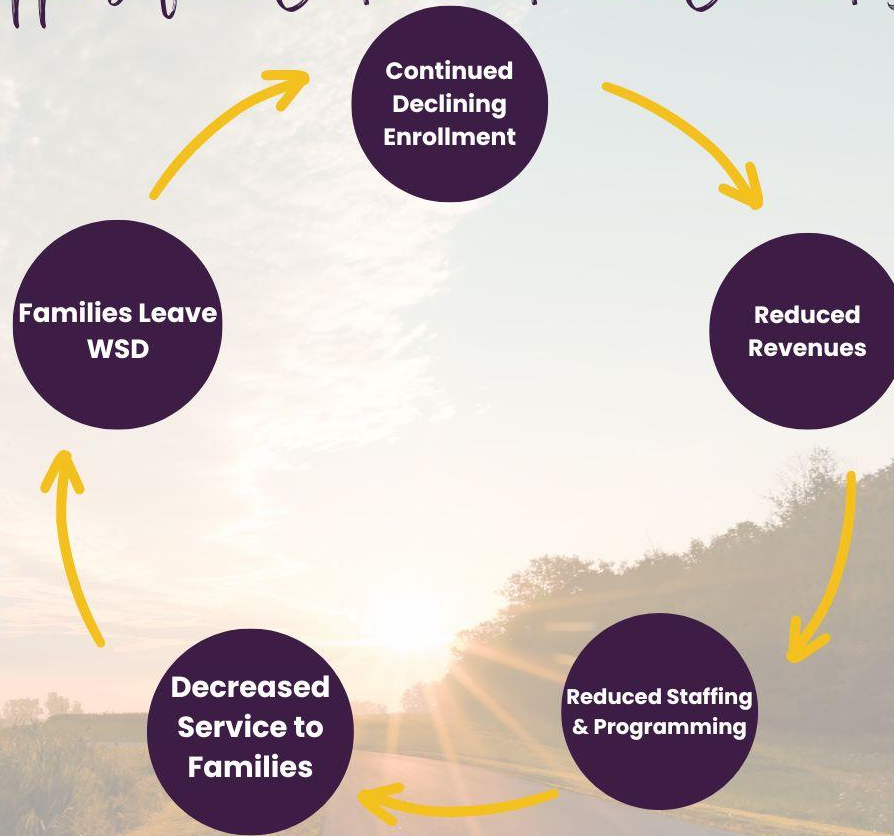


What Happens if we Continue
with our Current Structure?

**A Restructure of the Wausau
School District**

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What Happens if we Continue with our Current Structure?



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The Possibilities with a Restructure

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The Possibilities with a Restructure

- ★ More opportunities for students
 - Academics, Athletics, & Activities
- ★ Students can get the support they need when they need it
- ★ Better service to families
- ★ More effective use of district resources
- ★ Staff will not be split between so many buildings
- ★ Increased collaboration with and support of their colleagues
- ★ ...and so much more!

All students and staff will be supported before, during, and after the restructure. We will support them every step of the way!

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Risks Associated with a Restructure

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The Risks of a Restructure

★ Possible increased travel times

- We will take the next 2 years to develop transportation plans to limit bus rides to 60 minutes, with a few having a ride up to 90 minutes.
- We are also looking at investing recaptured funds to create a shuttle service.

The Solution!



★ Fewer varsity team opportunities due to reduction of teams from 2 to 1

- Create some new WIAA opportunities
- Create intramural opportunities

The Solution!



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The Risks of a Restructure

★ Closing and merging some schools may reduce public support for the Wausau School District initially.

- We will increase public support and enhance the unity of our community by engaging the public in recreating our school district.
- We will invite stakeholders to have a “seat at the table” as plans are made:
 - As our high school gets redeveloped
 - As our 5th grade students transition to middle school
 - As we create a transportation plan to support busy families with active students.



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The Risks of a Restructure



We may lose some traditions that are valued

- A team of staff and community members will review our current practices, traditions, and important events.
- The very things that have made these experiences special will be used as guidelines to recreate or create new traditions that will enhance the experiences of our students, staff, and families.



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Implementation

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Staggered Implementation?

To respond to concerns that we are doing too much too fast, we could “ease into” the changes that will accompany a district restructure effort. For instance, we can make incremental changes over 3-year period:

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STAGGERED IMPLEMENTATION



2025-2026:

Create the 8-9 junior high and 10-12 senior high

Year 1

2027-2028:

Consolidate our elementary schools and create 2 early childhood learning centers

Year 3

Year 2

2026-2027:

Move 5th grade into the middle schools

Potential Benefits of a Staggered Implementation

- ★ Spread out the District workload related to planning and implementation
- ★ Initial actions to restructure could serve to inform later efforts
- ★ Reduce the perception of doing "too much too fast"

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Risks to a Staggered Implementation

- ★ Extends the timeline to implement solutions to the various challenges
- ★ Staffing options will be more limited with fewer changes occurring simultaneously
- ★ Danger of 'stranding' various efforts. For example: if referendum funds are reallocated from Montessori to West, what happens to Montessori in the meantime?
- ★ We lose the benefit of making resources available to improve programming
- ★ Depending on state budgets, fiscal solutions will be limited

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Post-Board Action & Accountability

A Restructure of the Wausau School District

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Post-Board Action & Accountability

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- ★ If a Wausau School District restructure is approved, there are many things that will still require Board review & approval moving forward:
- Elementary school creation and re-purposing
 - Child care partnership agreements
 - Curriculum changes
 - Names of schools, mascots, etc.
 - Transportation plans
 - School schedules
 - Staffing plans

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In Summary: Restructure Includes:

- ★ One 10-12 senior high at Wausau West
- ★ One 8-9 junior high at Wausau East
- ★ Two 5-7 middle schools at John Muir and Horace Mann

Require Future
Board Action

- ★ Eight K-4 elementary schools
- ★ Appropriate facilities for charter schools and other specialized programming
- ★ Create "Early Learning Centers" for birth to 5 years for our staff and community
- ★ Reallocate referendum funds from Horace Mann/Montessori and Grant to create a 2-story addition at Wausau West

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Board Action

A Restructure of the Wausau School District

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The Motion:

**Move to approve the Wausau
School District restructuring plan
as presented for Fall 2025
implementation.**

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A scenic landscape featuring a winding asphalt road that curves through a green field. In the background, a bright sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the sky with soft, wispy clouds. To the right, a dense forest of green trees covers a rising hillside. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and hopeful.

Thank You!

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