



August 29 , 2023

Paul Peterson, Superintendent
Mankato Public School District, ISD #0077-01
10 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 2
Mankato, MN 56002

Dear Superintendent Peterson:

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires a review and comment statement on the educational and economic advisability of your proposed school construction project. Information supplied by your school district and from Minnesota Department of Education sources is the basis of this review and comment. With this positive review and comment, voter and school board approval is required for Mankato Public School District, Independent School District #0077-01, to proceed with the proposed projects.

The district shall publish a summary of the review and comment statement (the final three pages) in the legal newspaper of the district at least 48 days, but not more than 60 days, prior to holding a referendum for bonds or soliciting any bids for the construction, expansion, or remodeling of an educational facility. The department may request a statement certifying the publication, and require the submission, review, and approval of preliminary and final construction plans.

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires the commissioner to include comments from residents of the school district in the review and comment. As of the date of this letter, no public comments have been received. In addition, Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires the school board hold a public meeting to discuss the review and comment prior to the date of the bond referendum election.***

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires that a school district, prior to occupying a new or renovated facility after July 1, 2002, must submit a certification prepared by a system inspector to the commissioner and the building code official that will provide an occupancy permit.*** The certification must verify that the facility's installed or modified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system operates according to design specifications and code, a system for monitoring outdoor airflow and total airflow of ventilation systems has been installed, and any installed or modified heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system provides an indoor air quality filtration system that meets ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Standard 52.1.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Kubesh, Education Finance specialist, at 651-582-8319 or chris.kubesh@state.mn.us. Thank you for working with us to improve school facilities for Minnesota students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Willie L. Jett II'.

Willie L. Jett II
Commissioner

cc: Shannon Sinning, School Board Chair

Enclosure

**The Commissioner of the Department of Education
Review and Comment on the School Construction
Proposal of Mankato Public School District, ISD #0077-01**

A review and comment must be provided on a school district construction project proposal before the district conducts a referendum, solicits bids, or issues bonds for the project. A project proposal has been submitted for review and comment according to requirements set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, subdivisions 9 and 10, and Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72. The district provides the following information:

1. The geographic area and population to be served:
 - a. preschool through grade 12 student enrollment for the past five years, and
 - b. student enrollment projections for the next five years.
2. A list of existing school facilities:
 - a. by year constructed,
 - b. their uses, and
 - c. an assessment of the extent to which alternate facilities are available within school district boundaries and in adjacent school districts.
3. A list of specific deficiencies of the facility:
 - a. demonstrating the need for a new or renovated facility to be provided,
 - b. the process used to determine the deficiencies,
 - c. a list of those deficiencies that will and will not be addressed by the proposed projects,
 - d. a list of specific benefits that the new or renovated facility will provide to students, teachers, and community users served by the facility.
4. A description of the project, including:
 - a. specifications of site and outdoor space acreage,
 - b. square footage allocations for classrooms, laboratories and support spaces,
 - c. estimated expenditures for major portions of the project,
 - d. estimated changes in facility operating costs, and
 - e. dates the project will begin and be completed.
5. A specification of the source of project financing, including:
 - a. applicable statutory citations,
 - b. the scheduled date for a bond issue or school board action,
 - c. a schedule of payments, including debt service equalization aid, and
 - d. the effect of a bond issue on local property taxes by property class and valuation.
6. Documentation obligating the school district and contractors to comply with the following items:
 - a. Minnesota Statutes, section 471.345 governing municipal contracts,
 - b. sustainable design,
 - c. school facility commissioning under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72, certifying the plans and designs for heating, ventilating, air conditioning and air filtration for an extensively renovated or new facility meet or exceed current code standards, including ASHRAE air filtration Standard 52.1,
 - d. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) acoustical performance criteria, design requirements and guidelines for schools on maximum background noise levels and reverberation times,
 - e. state fire code,
 - f. chapter 326B governing building codes, and
 - g. consultation with affected government units about the impact of the project on utilities, roads, sewers, sidewalks, retention ponds, school bus and automobile traffic, access to mass transit and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Description of Proposed School Construction Project

Mankato Public School District, ISD #0077-01 is proposing a two question bond referendum on November 7, 2023. The first ballot question would authorize \$105 million in bonding authority to finance districtwide facility improvements. The largest of the proposed improvements would occur at Dakota Meadows Middle School and West High School. At Dakota Meadows, a new swimming pool and gymnasium is proposed, along with ancillary space. The new pool would replace the existing pool at West High School which has been closed for years. At West High School a new gymnasium/fitness center with ancillary space is proposed. Other proposed building additions at West High School would house: classrooms, a wrestling room and a secure entrance along with administrative office space. The existing gymnasium would be renovated to accommodate music and band programming.

The second ballot question would authorize an additional \$15 million in bonding authority to finance new stadiums at both high schools, along with artificial turf football fields. The proposed projects would be scheduled for completion in calendar years 2024 through 2025. Cost estimates by ballot question/location/project component are provided on the following page.

The district is projecting stable enrollment over the next several years. Roughly 280 resident students are lost via open enrollment. During the 2022-23 school year, 581 resident students open enrolled out of the district and 301 students open enrolled into the district. Most of the open enrollees out of the district (273) enrolled into the St. Clair School District.

The district has supplied cost estimates to operate and staff the additional building space and it appears existing revenues will be sufficient to fund the associated operational cost increases. The proposed project appears to be in the long-term interest of the school district.

If the bond referendum is successful and bonds are sold, the debt service on the bonds will be eligible for debt service equalization under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.53, subdivision 3, if the bond schedule is approved. The amount of debt service equalization aid, if any, the district receives is determined annually and is dependent upon property wealth, student population, and other statutory requirements.

Ballot Question #1					
Dakota Meadows Middle School		West High School		Early Childhood Center	
Building Additions:		Building Additions:		Site Improvements	\$235,875
Swimming Pool	\$12,320,754	Gymnasium	\$11,021,699	Kitchen Renovations	\$1,014,418
Gymnasium	\$3,526,690	Classrooms	\$6,868,000	Gymnasium Renovations	\$997,296
Locker Rooms	\$2,115,823	Wrestling Room	\$6,339,248	General Renovations	\$2,236,458
Circulation	\$966,488	Secure Entrance / Admin Offices	\$6,175,989	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$1,412,475
	\$18,929,755		\$30,404,936	Contingency	\$600,862
Other Project Costs:		Other Project Costs:			\$6,497,384
Site Improvements	\$1,200,000	Site Improvements	\$1,500,000	Washington Elementary	
Secure Entrance	\$2,227,510	General Renovations	\$40,265	Site Improvements	\$99,149
Renovations	\$283,200	Music Area Renovations	\$2,917,928	Secure Entrance Addition	\$142,737
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$6,060,066	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$9,917,244	Classroom Addition	\$521,038
Contingency	\$3,033,822	Contingency	\$4,671,659	General Renovations	\$643,053
	\$12,804,598		\$19,047,096	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$442,883
				Contingency	\$188,401
Total	\$31,734,353	Total	\$49,452,032		\$2,037,261
Roosevelt Elementary		Hoover Elementary		Jefferson Elementary	
Site Improvements	\$292,890	Site Improvements	\$125,426	Secure Entrance Addition	\$674,592
Secure Entrance Addition	\$132,895	Secure Entrance Addition	\$58,943	General Renovations	\$201,707
Classroom Addition	\$1,553,324	Classroom Addition	\$773,476	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$276,034
General Renovations	\$1,568,290	General Renovations	\$629,566	Contingency	\$181,832
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$1,117,430	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$500,034		\$1,334,165
Contingency	\$475,351	Contingency	\$329,388	Kennedy Elementary	
	\$5,140,180		\$2,416,833	Classroom Addition	\$961,721
Franklin Elementary		Monroe Elementary		General Renovations	\$756,362
General Renovations	\$292,409	General Renovations	\$345,963	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$541,196
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$92,109	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$108,978	Contingency	\$356,502
Contingency	\$60,675	Contingency	\$71,787		\$2,615,781
	\$445,193		\$526,728		
Eagle Lake Elementary		Bridges Elementary		Districtwide	
Site Improvements	\$79,511	Site Improvements	\$222,931	Bond Issuance	\$1,179,302
General Renovations	\$876,835	Classroom Addition	\$680,723		
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$301,249	General Renovations	\$72,429	Total - Ballot Question #1	\$106,179,301
Contingency	\$128,150	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$307,466		
	\$1,385,745	Contingency	\$130,795		
			\$1,414,344		
Ballot Question #2					
West High School		East High School			
Demo / Excavation	\$800,000	Demo / Excavation	\$350,000		
Grading - New Football Field	\$750,000	Grading - New Football Field	\$750,000		
New Artificial Turf Field	\$950,000	New Artificial Turf Field	\$950,000		
New Track	\$1,125,000	New Track	\$1,125,000		
Bleachers	\$1,150,000	Bleachers	\$1,150,000		
Fencing / Lighting	\$800,000	Fencing / Lighting	\$800,000		
Scoreboard	\$125,000	Scoreboard	\$125,000		
Entrance / Ticket Structure	\$300,000	Entrance / Ticket Structure	\$300,000		
Concessions / Restrooms	\$1,275,000	Fees, Permits & Testing	\$587,500		
Fees, Permits & Testing	\$587,500	Contingency	\$300,000		
Contingency	\$300,000	FF&E	\$200,000		
FF&E	\$200,000	Bond Issuance	\$130,592		
Bond Issuance	\$130,592		\$6,768,092		
	\$8,493,092				
		Total - Ballot Question #2	\$15,261,183		

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Review and Comment Statement

Based on the department's analysis of the school district's required documentation and other pertinent information from sources of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education provides a positive review and comment.

Additional Information is Available

Persons desiring additional information regarding this proposal should contact the school district superintendent's office.



Willie L. Jett II
Commissioner

August 29, 2023