



# FINAL REPORT

DECEMBER 12, 2022

## INTRODUCTION

One of the Edwardsville School District 7's priorities is to engage the community and ensure those who live and work in District 7 have a voice in its future. As part of its strategic improvement plan, the District 7 Board of Education turned to its community to help develop solutions to address the needs of its aging school buildings. In Fall 2022, ENGAGE District 7 was initiated to gather input from a broad array of stakeholders, including parents, employees, residents and community members. More than 250 community members provided valuable input through a series of community engagement sessions (CES) and more information was gathered through informal online surveys after each CES. Detailed information on the process and results can be found at [EngageDistrict7.org](https://EngageDistrict7.org).

## OVERVIEW

In September 2022, community members and District 7 employees embarked on the ENGAGE District 7 planning process in response to a charge from the Board of Education.

This four-month community engagement effort united those who live in the school district — community members, parents and employees — to provide suggestions and input on improving the learning environment and physical structure and safety of District 7 buildings in a fiscally responsible manner.

The community engagement process involved two Community Engagement Sessions consisting of four meetings per session, for a total of eight meetings. More than 250 members of the D7 school community took part in these Community Engagement Sessions. D7 Superintendent Dr. Patrick Shelton also held an informational meeting at Midway Elementary at 6 p.m. on Nov. 30 to provide additional information directly related to Midway and its critical building infrastructure needs.

The community-led Facilitating Team served as leaders of the ENGAGE District 7 program and met five times throughout the CES process. Dr. Lynda Andre and Lucas Siron served as co-chairs of the Facilitating Team and also met six times for co-chair meetings. In addition to the co-chairs, the Facilitating Team included 11 parents and community members and four district leaders and staff members. The information learned and documentation of the feedback gathered at each CES session is available online at [EngageDistrict7.org](https://EngageDistrict7.org).

The community engagement process resulted in recommendations presented in response to the goals given to ENGAGE District 7 participants by the Board of Education.

The following overview breaks the ENGAGE District 7 program into four sections: purpose, participants, process and product.





# PURPOSE

## History

In September 2021, the Edwardsville School District 7 began the process of developing a strategic plan to guide the District for the next five years. Following a year-long community engagement process, the District 7 Board of Education approved the district's new strategic plan in May 2022. The plan included goals related to fostering an equitable, safe, and inclusive environment for all members of the school community; and achieving strong financial standing that provides a value to taxpayers while optimizing programs, services, and facilities at maximum efficiency.

As a result of the new strategic plan, the District 7 Board of Education charged Cordogan Clark Architects with conducting a facilities review of D7 school facilities, beginning in September 2022. The assessment revealed issues to be addressed in D7's aging schools, including needs related to foundations and concrete, moisture, asbestos and equity and functionality related to student learning needs. The process to move D7 schools forward started in Fall 2022 when the vision of the Board of Education established a process to address its aging buildings and changes in curricular needs. The board established the ENGAGE District 7 program as a community-led process to ensure the community had a voice in decisions regarding the future of its district.

## Preserve Our Past, Plan Our Future

In 2022, the District 7 Board of Education charged the Facilitating Team with developing recommendations to create a fiscally responsible plan that meets the needs of D7 students now and in the future. The goal of ENGAGE District 7 was to provide an opportunity for meaningful conversations and gather input from a broad base of the community in order to develop long-range goals and priorities that:

- Improve the learning experiences and learning environments for students in a fiscally responsible manner;
- Determine how best to address long-term facility and enrollment changes; and
- Identify what steps should be taken now and in the future.

The Facilitating Team is presenting its findings to the Board of Education in December 2022, and the Board of Education is expected to vote on the recommendations in January 2023.

# PARTICIPANTS



Participation in the ENGAGE District 7 process occurred in a variety of ways — Facilitating Team (FT), ENGAGE District 7 Community Engagement Sessions (CES), and informal surveys administered online at the end of each CES. In addition to a variety of other communication efforts, two postcards were mailed to all D7 households throughout ENGAGE District 7 to invite them to participate in the process.

## Facilitating Team (FT)

As its name suggests, this team was responsible for facilitating the ENGAGE District 7 process. The 17-person team met five times, twice before the first ENGAGE District 7 community engagement session, twice in between the first and second sessions, and once at the end of the CES process.

As is so important in engagement programs, community members provided the leadership for the FT and the entire ENGAGE District 7 process. District administration, staff members and special advisors were also members of the FT and served as resources for the Community Chairs. The primary role of the FT was to provide leadership and coordination for the entire process. The group helped with decisions regarding process strategy and communications.

## ENGAGE District 7 Community Engagement Sessions (CES)

Since the ENGAGE District 7 Community Engagement Sessions were the central component of the process, there was a tremendous effort before the first meeting to communicate the importance of the process to the entire community. Throughout the process, the goal was to use every means possible to reach out and invite all District stakeholders to participate in the process.

The two Community Engagement Sessions consisted of four meetings each for a total of eight meetings. Approximately 258 stakeholders participated across these eight meetings.

## ENGAGE District 7 Informal Post-CES Surveys

During the Community Engagement Sessions, participants were able to take part in an informal online survey, and approximately 167 responses were received after CES1 and seven were received after CES2, providing more information about the community's thoughts and perceptions about the District, ENGAGE District 7, and potential plans for the future of D7 school buildings.

## Facilitating Team (FT) Participants

As its name suggests, this team was responsible for facilitating the Facilitating Team.

### Parents and Community Members

- Dr. Lynda Andre (co-chair)
- Lucas Siron (co-chair)
- Donna Charleston
- Ben Dickmann
- Ashley Gwin
- Anderson Jumper
- Dustin Jumper
- Stephanie Lyons
- John McDole
- Emily Mortland
- Kristen Pfund
- Walt Williams
- Kermit Winslow

### District Leadership and Staff

- David Courtney
- Dr. Patrick Shelton
- Michelle Seymour
- Matt Sidarous

# PARTICIPANTS

## CES Participants

The following individuals signed in at one or more engagement sessions.

Lisa Allen	Roseanne Franke	Shannon McBride	Missi Sanders
Melissa Allen	Arnold Franke	Jamie McClay	Ryan Savage
Elissa Almeter	Adam Garrett	Bob McClellan	Courtney Scanlon
Lynda Andre	Ted Gayford	John McDole	Victoria Scheibal
Jake Apple	Melanie Georges	Kasey McKinney	Morgan Schelling
Christina Armour	Justin Gerstner	Sally McLauchlan	Richard Schlesinger
Josh Arnold	Shaina Glass	Marci McLaughlin	Vince Schlueter
Cara Barker	Melody Godfrey	Andrea McNamara	Curt Schumacher
Lacey Barnett	Jacob Goebel	Lauren Meyer	Danielle Scott
Jeff Bash	Greg Gordon	Brett Meyer	Michael Scott
Craig Becker	Tricia Gray	Mary Miller	Ashlie Shaffer
Jill Bertels	Chelsey Gray	Cassee Mills	Matt Sidarous
Katie Bevis-O'Neal	Mary Grose	Kimberly Moody	Tori Siron
Gene Birdsell	Andrea Grotendorf	Chad Morris	Jane Sly
Kayla Bonebrake	Tim Gueldener	Emily Mortland	Cornelia Smith
Steve Bowker	Brittany Gueldener	Larry Mosby	Rachel Smith
MaryBeth Brown	Donny Gunter	Jennifer Murphy	Misty Smith
Katie Buckingham	Ashley Gwin	Katie Nappier	Bart Solon
Rachel Case	Scott Hagin	Sherri Naughton	Bridget Steiner
Donna Charleston	Holly Hampton	Jennifer O'Dell	Kyle Stewart
Terry Charleston	Ellen Helmers	Shawn O'Dell	Neal Stewart
Christy Cochran	Matt Horstmann	Colleen Olsen	Steve Stuart
Lori Compton	Raney Houblon	Lelan Olsen, DVM	Ann Taylor
Michelle Conkovich	Amanda Huling	Jen Ostrom	Jason Tetzlaff
Kim Cottrell	Bob & Pat Hulme	Jennifer Ostrom	Sarah Thompson
Tim Couch	Barb Hunter	Karen Pavlar Davis	Enya Timmermann
Wei Cui	Barb & Walter Hunter	Amanda Perry	Bob Timmermann
Terri Dalla Riva	Sara Jay	Kristen Pfund	Barbie Tingley
Kyle Delap	Sarah Jay	Kelli Pirtle	Nate Tingley
Gary Denué	Anderson Jumper	Debra Pitts	Amanda Tucker
M. Dominique	Barb Kinsella	Paula Pitts	Shawn Uhe
Katie Dowell Arnold	Tom Kinsella	Paul Pitts	MiKayla Vincent
Gayle Driscoll	Aaron Kruse	Ann Pratte	Nancy Werden
Melissa Edwards	Kylee Kuba	Erica Proctor	Leah Whitaker
Peggy Emling	Alison Lamothe	Carol Reinking	Aaron Wiemers
Josh Fark	Beth Langendorf	Julie Reising	Kara Wiemers
Darrin Feather	Staci Lawson	Rachel Reynolds	Jennifer Wilkins
Amy Ferguson	Stacey Lipe	Katie Robberson	Walt Williams
Josh Ferry	Kerry Lorts	Mandy Robbins	Andy Williams
Charles Finley	Mark Luchtefeld	Stephanie Robbins	Amy Williams
Elizabeth Finley	Sitso Luh Nutsukpui	Ashleigh Rockwell	Kermit Winslow
Tanetra Flewellen	Cara Lytle	Amy Roe	Lisa Wise
Tara Fox	Dan Lytle	Rob Ruehl	Dawn Wonders
Marissa Fraley	Stephanie Malench	Karen Rust	Diana Yost
Robert Frank	Mike Marchal	Kevin Rust	Robert Yost
Bob Frank	Julie Matarelli	Amy Ruyle	
Stephan Frank	Kevin Matarelli	Tom Saksa	





# PROCESS

The ENGAGE District 7 process consisted of two Community Engagement Sessions (with four meetings for each session), held in October and November 2022, and an informal online survey for each session. Participants in the Community Engagement Sessions helped determine key topics to be addressed during the second CES.

## **Step 1: Process & Goals**

The process began when the Board decided to move forward with the planning initiative and adopted the community engagement process and goals.

## **Step 2: Building The Team**

The next step was to build the Facilitating Team, which provided the leadership and guidance for the entire process. The first task in building this team was identifying and enlisting key community members to serve as chairpersons for the effort.

## **Step 3: Process Identity**

The process was given an official name — ENGAGE District 7: Preserve Our Past, Plan Our Future — and a project logo. This logo was used on all communication and meeting items.

## **Step 4: Informing The Community**

The next step in getting the process underway was building participation in the community-wide ENGAGE District 7 effort through an extensive communications program, which is detailed later in this report.

## **Step 5: The Schedule**

After thoroughly inviting the public to participate, it was time to begin the actual planning effort. A schedule was developed to allow adequate time between sessions to prepare informational presentations. This time also allowed participants to process and digest the information and discussions.

## Community Engagement Sessions

The first ENGAGE District 7 Community Engagement Session involved a series of four meetings, held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 12, 18, 19 and 20 at Worden, Columbus, Woodland and Cassens elementary schools, respectively. Approximately 141 community members and staff attended. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an introduction to the ENGAGE District 7 process, share an overview of an assessment completed on the physical and functional needs of D7 buildings and to engage participants in an activity to gather input and direction regarding what they wanted to learn more about to help develop a long-range facilities plan. Feedback from participants at this meeting was tabulated and summarized. This provided the basis for developing topical presentations for the second CES.

The second Community Engagement Session was held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Nov. 9, 15, 16 and 17 at Worden, Columbus, Woodland and Cassens elementary schools, respectively. Approximately 117 community members and staff attended. Participants reviewed and prioritized facility projects, and reviewed options for Lincoln Middle School and Hamel and Midway Elementary Schools.

Each CES followed a specific, timed agenda. The session began with a brief recap of the preceding meeting and a review of the materials in the agenda packet. Following these explanations was an informational presentation on the designated topic for the evening. Professionals and experts in each topic area gave the presentations. A copy of each presentation is provided on the ENGAGE District 7 website, including videos from each session. Presentations were rehearsed and critiqued by the Facilitating Team in advance. The Facilitating Team continuously evaluated the ENGAGE District 7 process.

A specific work activity followed the formal presentation at each meeting. Participants worked in small groups (four to seven individuals per table) to complete the activity. Participants were randomly assigned to a small group as they arrived for the session. The intent was to create an opportunity for participants to meet new people each time and hear different perspectives from a variety of individuals.

Each small group selected its own facilitator and spokesperson. The facilitator was instructed to complete the worksheet based on the consensus or general agreement of the group. Following the small group work, the spokesperson from each group was invited to share the main ideas from the group with all the participants at the session. The worksheet was then collected from each table for documentation.

All presentations and meeting documentation were available at the Community Engagement Sessions and online at [EngageDistrict7.org](https://EngageDistrict7.org).



## Documentation

Transparency and documentation are critical components of a successful community engagement effort. The ENGAGE District 7 process and the feedback received throughout were thoroughly recorded with the following documents, which were made available to the public following each community engagement session.

*Verbatim responses:* A document of responses transcribed directly from the worksheets turned in by each small group at the Community Engagement Session.

*Executive summary:* A summary of the verbatim responses.

Videos of the sessions were filmed and are located online at [EngageDistrict7.org](https://EngageDistrict7.org)

## ENGAGE District 7 Informal Post-CES Surveys

An informal online survey to learn more about the community's thoughts and perceptions about the District, ENGAGE District 7, and potential plans for the future of its school buildings was administered after each CES. A total of 169 responses were received after the first CES, and seven responses were received after the second CES.

## ENGAGE District 7 Community Engagement Schedule

**Sept. 27**

Facilitating Team Meeting

**Oct. 4**

Facilitating Team Meeting

**Oct. 11**

BOE Facility Presentation

**Oct. 12**

Community Engagement Session,  
Worden Elementary

**Oct. 18**

Community Engagement Session,  
Columbus Elementary

**Oct. 19**

Community Engagement Session,  
Woodland Elementary

**Oct. 20**

Community Engagement Session,  
Cassens Elementary

**Oct. 25**

Facilitating Team Meeting

**Nov. 3**

Facilitating Team Meeting

**Nov. 9**

Community Engagement Session,  
Worden Elementary

**Nov. 15**

Community Engagement Session,  
Columbus Elementary

**Nov. 16**

Community Engagement Session,  
Woodland Elementary

**Nov. 17**

Community Engagement Session,  
Cassens Elementary

**Nov. 30**

Midway Meeting

**Dec. 6**

Facilitating Team Meeting

**Dec. 12**

BOE Facility Presentation

**Dec. 19**

BOE Facility Discussion

**Jan. 9**

BOE Vote on Bond  
Recommendation



## COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

Several strategic communications tools regarding ENGAGE District 7 were developed and implemented to create awareness and encourage participation from key audiences, including parents, those who live in the District, district staff and community leaders. A strong recruitment effort by FT members, building principals and District leadership was also conducted.

Communications tools included:

**Email:** Emails were sent to parents, staff, and community members before each Community Engagement Session.

**Website:** A section of the District's website was developed to share information and documentation and gather RSVPs throughout the process. Recordings of the meetings were posted on the website after each session.

**Postcards:** Two postcards were sent via postal mail to all households in all D7 communities.

**Social Media:** Information about the process and Community Engagement Sessions was shared through Facebook posts and events, Instagram posts, and Twitter posts. The city of Edwardsville, village of Glen Carbon and the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon Chamber of Commerce also shared posts about the program.

**Yard Signs:** Signs were posted in the yards of each school publicizing ENGAGE District 7.

**Flyers and Handouts:** Flyers were developed throughout the process and distributed to the schools and community.

**Newspaper Ads:** Two newspaper ads were published in *The Intelligencer* throughout the process.

**School Marquees:** Information about the ENGAGE District 7 meetings was displayed on school marquees.





# PRODUCT

Ideas and suggestions collected at the D7's Community Engagement Sessions, as well as some additional informal survey responses, provided important information for ENGAGE District 7's final recommendations. Based on input and feedback from community and staff, ENGAGE District 7 presents the following recommendations to the Edwardsville School District 7 Board of Education.

## **PHYSICAL NEEDS AND FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT PRIORITIES** *(Priorities ranked from highest to lowest)*

1. Building safety/secure access
2. Building envelope (roofs, exterior wall, windows)
3. Building infrastructure (electrical, heating/cooling/plumbing)
4. Enhance site and traffic flow
5. Energy-efficient and sustainable construction
6. Interior finishes (flooring, ceilings, walls, etc.)
7. Site paving and playgrounds
8. Engaging and inviting spaces (warm, inviting, open)
9. Maintaining building equipment (cabinets, lockers, bleachers)

## **FUNCTIONAL/CURRICULAR/PROGRAM NEEDS PRIORITIES** *(Priorities ranked from highest to lowest)*

1. Ability to control access; secure environment
2. Maximize student services
3. Spaces for specialty instruction (tech/career prep, arts, PE)
4. 21st century accommodations (student-centered environment)
5. Flexibility to accommodate changing instructional approaches
6. Ability to control the environment (heat, light, humidity)
7. Lower operating costs
8. Enhanced commons areas
9. Create collaborative learning areas throughout
10. Create outdoor learning spaces
11. Ability to accommodate community functions

### **FACILITY PRIORITIES BY SCHOOL** *(Priorities ranked from highest to lowest)*

1. Double-entry doors at remaining schools (Glen Carbon, Leclaire, Nelson, Columbus and Woodland elementary schools, Lincoln Middle School and Edwardsville High School)
2. Lincoln Middle School rebuild on-site (preferred option)
3. Hamel Elementary School asbestos remediation/classroom build (preferred option)
4. Expanding the commons at Edwardsville High School
5. Office relocation at Nelson Elementary School
6. Safe and accessible playgrounds at all primary and intermediate schools
7. Safe and accessible gymnasiums at Leclaire, Glen Carbon and Columbus elementary schools
8. Media centers at Columbus Elementary School, Woodland Elementary School and Edwardsville High School
9. STEM Lab at Edwardsville High School

*In addition to the above priorities identified throughout the ENGAGE District 7 sessions, other suggestions for consideration were presented by the community. These additional recommendations are as follows for Midway Elementary School:*

1. Conduct a second engineering survey
2. Provide additional data on bus route times

### **THE DISTRICT 7 COMMUNITY SHOULD**

- Continue to have the opportunity to learn and provide feedback about the future of D7 schools.
- Continue to be well-informed about District operations, facilities and finances.
- Be well-informed and actively involved in supporting students as these recommendations are implemented and schools are renovated, rebuilt or retired.



## GOALS TO ACCOMPLISH RECOMMENDATIONS

**To make these recommendations a reality and address the identified facility needs in the Edwardsville School District 7, ENGAGE District 7 recommends the Board of Education place a \$100 million zero-tax-rate change bond proposal\* for building repairs and improvements on the April 2023 ballot to address these goals:**

- Ensure funding is in place to allow for critically-needed projects to begin in 2024.
- Ensure all D7 schools have up-to-date safety and security features, including secure entryways at every building.
- Proactively maintain and update building infrastructure items like roofs, windows, electrical systems, plumbing and HVAC systems.
- Develop an initial timeline for the implementation of the ENGAGE District 7 recommendations and thoroughly communicate this timeline with the community.

**To work toward accomplishing these goals, the District should:**

- Install double-entry doors at remaining schools for improved safety and security at schools that do not have them (Glen Carbon, Leclaire, Nelson, Columbus and Woodland elementary schools, Lincoln Middle School, and Edwardsville High School).
- Rebuild Lincoln Middle School on its existing site with the goal of retaining the 1925 building, and with other sections being deconstructed, then occupied through construction phased over a 36-to-42-month period. This recommendation will address identified infrastructure, accessibility and moisture concerns at the school.

- Conduct a second engineering survey/report specifically for Midway Elementary School to ensure all information is available and as up-to-date as possible prior to any final decision about the school.
- Review data for Midway Elementary School bus route times to determine if routes and times are efficient and meet the needs of students and families prior to any final decision about the school.
- Develop a plan for Midway Elementary School based on community priorities and additional information obtained from the requested engineering survey and other data.
- Remediate asbestos and build new classrooms at Hamel Elementary School.
- Expand the commons at Edwardsville High School.
- Relocate the office at Nelson Elementary School.
- Provide safe and accessible playgrounds at all primary and intermediate schools.
- Provide safe and accessible gymnasiums at Leclaire, Glen Carbon and Columbus elementary schools.
- Create media centers at Columbus Elementary School, Woodland Elementary School and Edwardsville High School.
- Recommend removing Priority 9 (STEM lab at Edwardsville High School) from the current priority list. When other priority items are complete, determine the feasibility of building a STEM lab at Edwardsville High School.

*\*Zero impact to the portion of the tax rate used for paying down District 7 debt.*